

**cross-currents in culture** ● number 12 • spring 2001 • free

# VARIANT



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# A conversation with James Kelman

**In September 1999 the first new play by James Kelman for five years was ready for production on a profit-share basis by a small Glasgow-based company, the actor Gary Lewis had already committed to it. At the time Kelman was joint holder of the Scottish Writer of the Year award. Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre was the first venue approached. It was Kelman's choice; during past years three of his own plays and one of his translations have been produced there. The Traverse requested that in the first instance Kelman should submit the play for consideration by the "literature committee". He replied to the effect that he didn't do auditions these days. The Traverse insisted so he withdrew the play and wrote to the Scottish Arts Council to express his feelings about the situation.**

**This is an informal conversation, more than an interview, recorded in late August 2000, which reveals something of what it is to be a writer working in Scotland.**

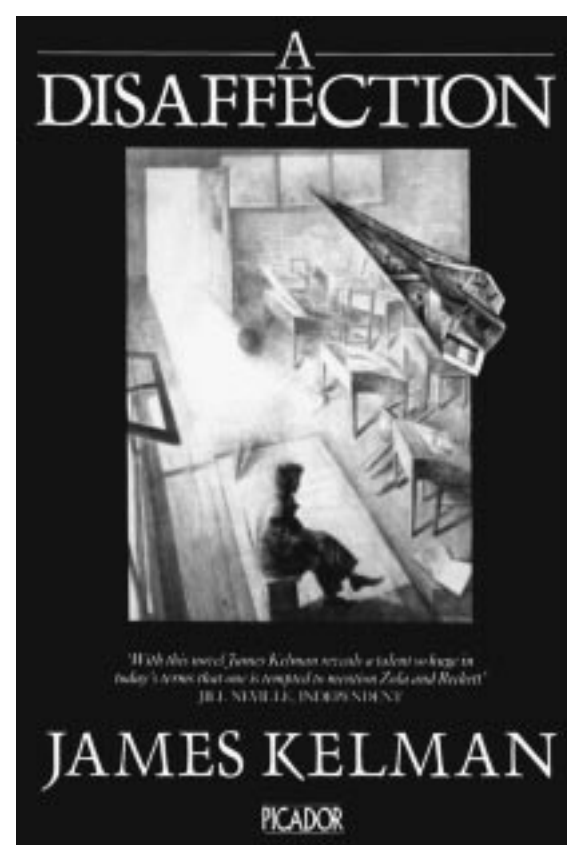
**William Clark**

**James Kelman** When I got involved in this thing last September [1999], almost a year ago, I thought of it as something personal and was wanting to keep it personal. I'd just come home from the States, I had been away about a year so things were kind of hectic and I didn't want to get too involved. I didn't have the time to get involved anyway, I had a lot of stuff to clear up; the new novel, get on with my essays, then the plays. But I thought about going public. There seemed to be a lot happened within the Arts Council in the last couple of years that was detrimental, and it should be taken on. The changes to do with the Book Trust for instance, as I understand it the Book Trust is now responsible for a lot of work the Literature Department used to do. Things that had been the case are no longer the case, such as money. Before, if you were ever taking part in a gig, doing a reading or whatever, where the audience were charged to get in, you'd always be paid a minimum wage. The writer would not take part in something where there was an admission fee and no payment and the Arts Council would not have supported such an event. There was always a basic payment for the writer. That was part of the way things used to operate so there's been a lot of changes, all these rip-off readings from places like Borders and Waterstones, writers never getting a paid a penny, why don't they boycott them. I remember a couple of years back the Edinburgh Book Festival broke the guidelines, they offered me a fee of fifty quid. I couldn't believe it. At that time the minimum Arts Council fee was £80, maybe £70. It was extraordinary they tried to get away with it. They were surprised when I said no! I don't know how it is at the Book Festival nowadays, I haven't been back since.

No writer should ever take part in that kind of shit. The public getting charged money to get in as

well, why don't they pay the writers a proper fee! The same with financial support to arts magazines, the main reason the Arts Council gave it was so the writers who wrote for them got a payment for the contribution. So there was that, then the way the education department has crept into the Arts Council reckoning as well. Does that mean their criteria will start being used to deal with writers, censoring or suppressing the ones school inspectors don't want to be seen or heard in a classroom? So now writers who are in any way radical are going to stop getting readings? is that what it means? It'll just be all the safe bastards who'll be earning the fees from school or university readings. Of course that is the way it is just now anyway when you look about, I'm talking generally, the ones getting all the 'creative writing' and residency jobs. You just have to look at the literary brochures and flyers coming at you, quite a cosy wee scene, and then there's the usual team that gets all these invitations to British Council events—Burns Suppers in Turkey and Israel, Saudi Arabia, etc.

So a lot of different things, I felt there was a lot of questions needing to be addressed. Other writers feel the same. And if I had got too involved in this thing of mine with the Arts Council I thought I would wind up having to address these other issues and I didn't want to, so I was being selfish, no time no energy. I tried to keep it at that personal level, just me moaning. Here was a situation pertaining to myself, one writer, a writer who has done this much work, x-amount. It doesn't have to be good, bad or indifferent work either, just that if this writer gets a new book out people will read it and if he puts on a new play audiences will want to go and see it. Good bad or indifferent. Just because the writer has already done all that work



in the past and the audience know it, and now here he's got a new work out, that's why the audience are going to be interested. They might go away and criticise it, condemn it, but they'll go and see it in the first place, because it's a particular writer they know: "Kelman's first play for five years, let's go and see it." The Traverse wouldn't have lost, it was just a profit-share, no wages, but we would've got some expenses. So these kind of arguments, basic arguments, I just wanted to let the Arts Council hear my side of it, I can't get my work on in this country unless I'm prepared to put up with these stupid insults. Not even for nothing! Submit your work for consideration! They're so fucking naive, they don't even know they're insulting you. Or do they? I felt part of the strength of my case was because it was one writer, it didn't matter who the hell you were, to the extent that even somebody who was joint holder of the Scottish Writer of the Year Award, Booker Prize bla bla bla, even a writer like that could not get a play on without auditioning, getting approval from some sort of literature committee, without meeting their criteria, whatever that might be, amazing crap. A profit-share remember, we weren't looking for any commission-type payment from the theatre, just a percentage of the box-office, we were doing all our own rehearsals, finding our own space, in our time, every damn thing, props, the fucking lot, we were asking nothing from them at all except the space to perform the play for a week or two—well, a week, five or six days, they told us there was no chance of a fortnight—nobody gets a fortnight for a touring show, so they

say. I thought the strength of the case lay in keeping it personal. A general case could come about but only as an effect of the personal thing. As well as that I felt it was something that could be put right if I explained the situation as clearly as I could, "I cannot get a play on at the Traverse Theatre for nothing, not even for no money," just something like that.

**William Clark** You wrote to the Arts Council?

**JK** Yeah.

**WC** There's an expectation that they can do something. There's also an expectation—you were saying—you assumed that people were aware of your work or that people had made themselves aware of what's going on in Scotland. One makes these assumptions: that people at a certain level within the Arts Council are even aware of these things or aware of real problems within their organisation or even aware of contemporary art, and they tend to be oblivious.

**JK** You're right to that extent, but it took me a while to realise that they didn't know my work. They maybe knew it by repute. And not always by the repute I would have chosen. I mean what was coming across was that they didn't really know my work and some of the attitudes they had to it were the same kind of attitudes you would get from papers like the *Sunday Times*, not the Scottish edition.

**WC** 'It's not proper literature.'

**JK** Yeah, they regard me as a 'primitive', 'preculture'; writers like me are 'savages'. But it surprised me, even at this stage in your writing life how you still get the vaguely patronising, vaguely irritated attitude coming to you from the Scottish Arts Council. It's an anglocentric thing, quite a common attitude to Scottish art from people in high Arts Council positions. So there are two points there Billy, the first thing relating to what you scoffed at, the idea of the Arts Council being able to have some kind of influence on their own employees, I mean the staff at the Traverse Theatre. Of course they saw the Traverse employees as the ones they're in solidarity with. Whatever the employee says goes, and they'll back them up to the hilt. They see you as being the foreigner, the artist. The artist is the alien figure that they're in opposition to. They don't see themselves as people who are there in order to support and assist artists. They don't see themselves as that.

**WC** Not at all.

**JK** So the first point you made is dead right. Yeah I wouldn't have illusions about that. Except I did have expectations! In relation to the Traverse you've got to remember that I'd already had a play produced there—two plays. In fact it's been four I've had over the years. One play was actually commissioned by them, and I had one translation commissioned from them as well, a play by a French writer, both about 10 or 12 years ago. So what with that and my last play on—*One-two-hey* with the Blues Poets band—you felt, well, there's no question here, no economic question either because *One-two-hey* sold out, there's going to be a proper box-office return, it's guaranteed. The Traverse'll know all that stuff already.

**WC** They were aware of that?

**JK** I don't know. I think I wrote to the director of the theatre in the first place just to make sure he was aware. If he hadn't been at that time then I was going to fill him in with the details. I was basically expecting that he was going to put a word in the ear of the Traverse admin staff: "Don't worry, it's James Kelman, he's a known writer here in Scotland and he's already got a track record, people'll go and see his stuff. It's just a profit-share touring thing anyway." Instead of that the director's position to me was "Well I'm backing up the decision already made by my staff and you're out of line expecting anything different. But don't worry, the committee are not going to actually judge your play, it's something else, they just want to see if it fits the Traverse bill." Something like that, just splitting hairs. "You've got to put your work in front of our literature committee the same as anybody else. Do you expect to be treated differently because you're a senior writer?" The

Traverse director used that phrase which grated on me, putting me in my place, "senior writer". Not because of the age thing, I don't dispute it, I'm in my 50s. But there was the implication that somebody like me expects to be beyond criticism just because I'm an old bastard, as if I'm saying younger writers should be criticised and judged but not me because I'm beyond it.

So that kind of shite. I felt it was important for me to address that. On the one hand I felt yeah, there's elements in what you're saying that are true. But I know my own response isn't just due to egocentricity or perversity or out and out vanity. There is some underlying critical point I want to get to. So I went into it, I tried to work out what the argument was. Why is it that I expect to be treated differently from somebody else. Is that what I was asking? Here's another way of saying it: Why does the 53 year old Kelman expect to be treated differently to the 25 or 30 year old Kelman? It can't just be an ego thing. Or can it? So these kind of questions.

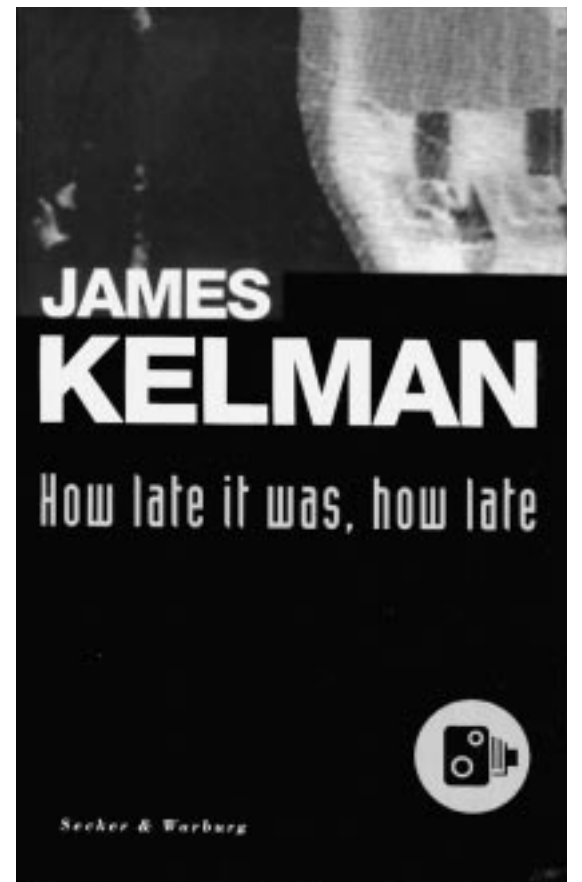
I was saying to them the burden of proof is not on me as a writer, that became the bottom line. Look, here is all the work I've produced, it's all out there, it's available, it can be criticised and looked at whenever. If you want to check out my stuff go to the fucking library. I don't have to prove to the Traverse literature committee or any other damn committee that I'm capable of doing this, that or the next thing. I've done all that, time and time again. Here is all my work, it's all out in the open. Just about everything I've ever written is still in print, including three of my plays. So why is it that you want to "consider" my work? What's the context or whatever that makes it valid for you to make that demand? Why do you feel that my work needs to be "considered" by you? Is it to establish that my play will be worthy of being staged at the Traverse? Is it just to see if it'll be "good". What evidence do you have to suggest that I might give you in something that's "bad"? Away and check your records, go and see how my last three or four plays went, my last two plays sold out, you've got the figures, what the hell is it, what's going on here?

**WC** So this is the Traverse Theatre literary Dept.?

**JK** Yeah, literature committee

**WC** Who is that?

**JK** I hear it can be anybody in the Traverse who's around. They weren't going to say it was this individual or that individual. Just whoever was in that committee at that time. I don't know who it is. It wouldn't matter who it is. I wouldn't allow my work to be "considered" by any of the Arts Council bosses, never mind the literary committee at the Traverse. I'm one of the ones who would never apply for these £25,000 grants they're always on about, "Creative-Scotland" awards! For me no one who is a serious artist, who has produced a real body of work, can ever apply for these grants. They're premised on certain attitudes or values in relation to art that very few real artists could support, not honestly, they would have just to kid on. There's a certain way of looking at art, or what equals the 'end' of the art project, it can be seen in the brochure/application thing. It's a kind of end-means way of looking at art that I don't think artists themselves really share at all. Old fashioned reactionary crap, it's 19th century stuff. "How do you expect this work to be valued by the public?" That sort of stupid question Arts Council officers give to artists before handing them out money so they can go and do their fucking work. Naive shite. I would not allow my work to be put in front of any of these people, no, no longer. I might have when I was a young artist, because I had no body of work, fair enough, sometimes I did do that. But sometimes I didn't do it. When Polygon made that first contact with me for *Not Not While the Giro*, back in 1981 I had already stopped sending my stuff out for "consideration". Even at that time I had stopped it. If they wanted my stuff fine, I gave them it, if they didn't I didn't, I wasn't going to fucking audition. That was then never mind now. But if you have a substantial body of work there's no need anyway I mean what the fuck do they want off you?



**WC** So is it your concept of the artist that is alien to these people. You use the word artist, they use the word, but it's not the same.

**JK** Yeah, not at all. It's weird to meet it head-on like that.

**WC** For them an artist is some form of rent boy or something: you're rented; but sometimes you don't even get the money.

**JK** Yeah, that became quite clear, it becomes clear in the whole phraseology, I got another of the "Creative-Scotland" awards information through the letter-box recently. It came through my agent believe it or not...

**WC** Ha!

**JK** Yeah, "I thought I should make you aware of it." She's right but, of course she should make me aware of it, that's the sort of thing she gets paid for, she's a good agent. The first time I was sent it was in the middle of all the shenanigans, it was from the director of literature or maybe the over-all Arts Council director. Probably an obscure form of put-down. You could only apply in a cynical way because like I said it's got certain attitudes towards art which one cannot share in the year 2000. To give the Arts Council the benefit of the doubt, these are very old fashioned attitudes, not beyond first year art theory or something. They make these assumptions about how "we" value art. Its like, What! in order to discover the merit of my work I've got to look at how the audience responds to it! I beg your pardon! The beholder's response to a work of art will define the value of the work of art! That sort of ludicrous shite. You expect it from first year students, not from people experienced in art. But it's very convenient in relation to funding if you're representing a public body dishing out so-called public funds to so-called artists, you get seen as an efficient individual who is putting the wishes of the public totally to the fore, it's pure crap.

**WC** It's just a bureaucratic expediency. They're now getting to the position whereby they prescribe the work: "We will fund a film like..." and then they name a film maker who they like. That makes their job easy, it makes arts administration a very biased phoney rationing of resources. That's all it is.

**JK** There was a Scottish film maker based in New York, a young guy, he was wanting to do a film of my novel *The Busconductor Hines*, a few months ago. So I did the first draft screenplay to get things moving, it was long, 250 to 300 pages, a full piece of work. Later on in the process the guy approached Scottish Screen. I didn't know he was doing that, but when he told me I went along with it. I thought there must be something in it, maybe a change in policy, maybe they were starting to



support actual writers... Then I was asked along to an interview with the Scottish Screen people. I liked the guy I met there and quite respected what he was saying at first. But then I realised that the only reason I was there was they were wanting to work out if I was worthy of being given a wee up-front sum of dough in order to complete a second draft, or maybe take it a stage further, get it finished, I can't quite remember. That was all it was, all that palaver, just to see if they would throw me a few quid to do more work on the screenplay, they wanted to see if it was merited or not. To give me the fucking money I mean! I was supposed to submit the first draft of the screenplay to them so they could say whether or not I was worthy of getting this small up-front sum of dough.

I said "No, you're not judging me at all, what are you talking about?" They were wanting to "consider" my first draft and chat about whether or not the project was merited or some such shite! I had already done all the work—the slogging stuff—for nothing, for no wages, that first draft like I said, I done a full job on it. Remember as well that this was a film based on my own adaptation of my own novel. So all this crap was just if they would deign to give me a wee sum of dough in order for me to go away and work on it some more. The public's dough! This is Scottish Screen right. The guy who's interviewing me, he's got my entire first draft screenplay in front of him.

It was to be a three person committee. So who's to be involved in that? How are they going to do their judging? Are they going to read my novel and then read the first draft screenplay, and if so then what, what does that tell them? And who's to do it anyway, who is there in Scottish film that's work a fucking button, who is there to respect as an artist, is there anybody at all, maybe one or two. But really, it's hard to think of anybody in Scottish movies you could trust as an artist, they all compromise, they go for easy options, else they just sell out altogether, and now they're going to sit and "consider" my work! Fuck off. I just find that extraordinary, I'm talking about six months ago. At this stage in my life my work is going to be judged by people like that to get a couple of thousand quid to go away and work on the next stage of the screenplay. It is fucking unbelievable. This is public money for christ sake it's for artists, to help them do their work, let us do our fucking work, it's just a wage, you'll get it back. What right do they have to stop us doing our work? That's what happening. The same as happened to the play, that film project has finished, like every other film project I've ever been involved in, nothing.

**WC** But a great deal of the public money is tied up by the administrators of public money. You mentioned Scottish Screen. It emerged that previous director, gave himself a million pounds of Scottish Screen public money, over and above his salary as an administrator, for his own project. Some people are administering these things to try to get at the money first.

**JK** Well they're succeeding.

**WC** The government policy may or may not be well-intentioned, but all they can ever produce ends up as an opportunist's charter. Certain perennial problems of government exist. We're asked to believe that with prohibition in America they couldn't foresee the rise of...well, look at the drug laws now: they actually pretend they're working. They can't admit that corruption will destroy any system.

**JK** It was foolish of me to get involved. It was a misunderstanding. You see I hadn't realised that the guy in New York who was going to get things moving had approached Scottish Screen at this trivial level. I thought there was a new approach going on and they were saying, "Right, Kelman is going to do an adaptation of one of his novels at long last and he's already done a full first draft screenplay. The project's got x-amount of dough ready to come in from Canada and New York and wherever, once it's up and running, so if we give them such and such an amount that'll get the thing moving, once we stick in something the overseas money'll start coming in." That's the level I thought the discussion was going to be at. Then I

found out no, it was the same old story, it was back to that old stage where I was going to have to audition my work for a committee of three just to see if I was worthy of the chance to develop my fucking screenplay. And not even to get proper dough, just a wee personal sum so I could revise the fucking script! There's a good boy, a pat on the head. I felt oh christ I'll call this off immediately.

The way I see it over the years Scottish Screen was always just a corrupt body, intellectually bankrupt, like the telly or something. All you have to do is see the people involved in writing the shoddy third rate work that comes out. It never uses real writers. Why is that? Maybe once in a blue moon. It gives a lot of money to actors, directors and all these other people to do screenplays. How come they never pay real writers? The bottom line is they don't want real writers. It's like Hollywood in the 50s or something.

**WC** But a lot of American writers did work for the movies, Faulkner...

**JK** Yeah there was a good period. But the 50s was a time when they started to get rid of real writers, the McCarthy era. What you saw was how the directors became the main figures, real writers were too political. So Scottish Screen in that sense is just part of the usual Scottish Arts scene. All they want is working-class sentimental shite, a kitchen-sink fantasy land, fucking hopeless. What a waste of time, all the emotional energy. For me now it's finished, Scottish theatres like the Traverse as well, finished in a personal way. I should've known that a while back when the Traverse refused to let me, Tom Leonard and George Gallacher's blues band use their space to play a one-off night, they didn't think we could get an audience—for a one-off night performance! Fucking hell man. Another profit-share thing. That was less than three years ago, just before I went to work in Texas. Of course theatre's been finished for a while now anyway and I should have realised that. I'm finishing this new book of essays of mine and there's a big diatribe I wrote back in 1987 or something, caused by the shit that went on trying to put on another play of mine, *In the Night*. So here I am just now fighting a battle I wouldn't have wasted my time fighting twelve or thirteen years ago. I wrote a bit about it in the introduction to that book of plays of mine, *Hardie & Baird*. Fucking waste of energy. It's shocking, but at the same time...

**WC** Earlier on we were criticising the history of Scottish theatre and now with all the closures and 'privatisation' there's no future. Some people would say there's been a lot of things: some sort of reputations and ultimately it's come through. Theatres have come through 'Thatcherite' arts council policies whereby it's complete commercialisation and forget anything else. I felt that

via the Arts Council the government pushed this managerialism—organisations were swayed through that, because it was presented as purely administrative. Now it's all up in the air again: it's still totally tied in with government policy, there's no two ways about that. To get funding from the Arts Council you must follow *and like* the government policies and views or put up a believable impersonation of that. But what are the models for that kind of thing: Stalinist Russia? Who exactly is being helped along here? There's also the law of diminishing returns. How many plays that say the government's policies are fantastic would you want to go and watch in a year? What defence is there against that, what awareness of it even, on the part of the SAC? With Magnus Linklater—an appointee of the previous administration—the arts suddenly became an opportunity to *negotiate* a salary straight from the word go. For everybody else its take it or leave it.

**JK** I suppose with myself when I wrote to Magnus Linklater I also wanted things to be on record. So I don't really regret all the time I've spent, because I have this correspondence here and the idea of making it known like just now. Plus nobody can say I didn't try, like when I tell people in the States I can't get a play on and they look at me, well, here it is, I was stopped at this level and that level, this is me being stopped. I still can't get a play done at a place like The Traverse without doing a clown routine for the bastards, and I'm talking about for nothing, no wages.

**WC** Maybe you didn't really see it but at the time of the Booker Prize a lot of the coverage—like the *Times* and so on—would say it's an insult to the Booker Prize, you get Waugh or Julia Neuberger or Greer, somebody like that and their tirade of gibberish. But it must be quite effective. In some ways it colours some people's views of your work.

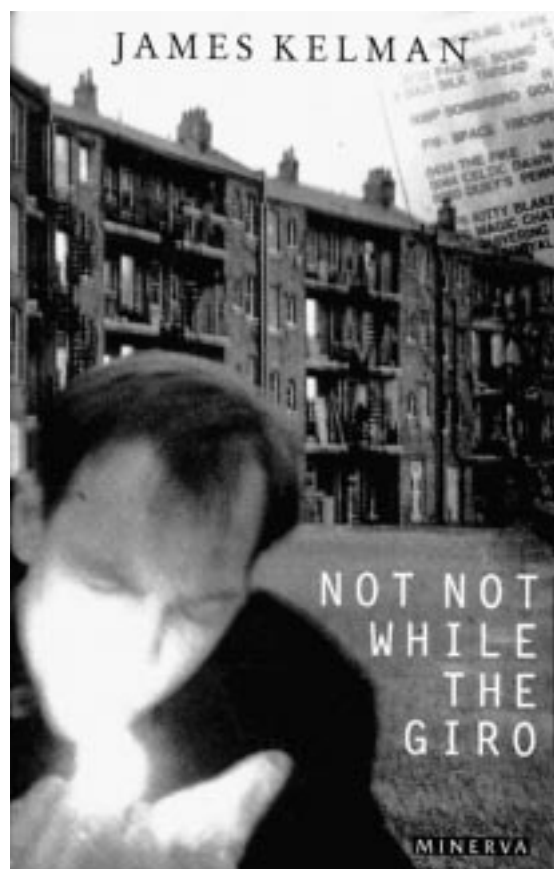
**JK** Yeah...well it did up here too, MPs obviously, they took the Neuberger line and supported the hostility against me. Brian Wilson and other ones, Donald Dewar, they attacked, every Labour MP who opened his mouth—apart from Gordon Brown, he was the only one I saw that came out in print without attacking me. Like *The Glasgow Herald* as well, after I won the thing just about the entire bunch that write for it came out and attacked, they all found their own wee way of doing it, it was like tossing coconuts, it was so bad the fucking editor was reduced to defending me, Arnold Kemp. What was interesting too was that bodies like the Saltire Society attacked. They just took the Neuberger line on language as having some truth in it. I remember the quote from the Saltire Society was something like "Oh yes, Scottish writers tend to shoot themselves in the foot." Something like that. So here you've got people who are directly associated with contemporary writing in Scotland just taking up that uncritical hostile position to a Scottish writer, basically on the word of an English tabloid, and you would have that hostility from a lot of the Scottish educational system, yeah, and people involved with the SNP of course, they came out and attacked the novel as well, Paul Scott...

**WC** What because everyone else was?

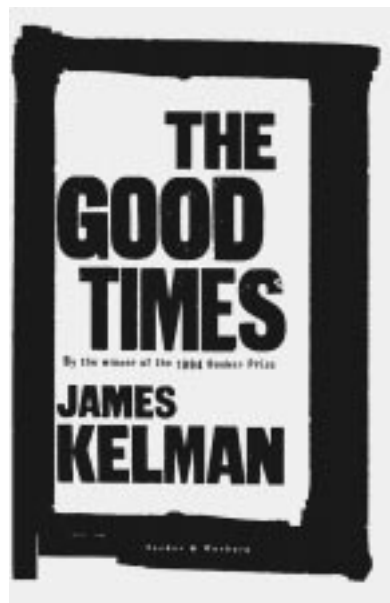
**JK** Perhaps it was that. It was also because the conventional wisdom being peddled was that my work was "primitive writing" and they wanted to be seen as being on the side of "matters of the intellect" or something, the SNP, they didn't want to be seen as 'parochial'! They were wanting to be seen as mature persons, they're big enough to attack a Scottish work written in a Scottish kind of working class dialect bla bla bla... It's part of that colonial mentality again, inferiorisation, plus the usual anglocentric attitudes from the Scottish establishment. That would have been part of the crap that was going on from them, I don't know. One of the points that you were making earlier in relation to Thatcher and 1979, there certainly were shifts in the arts. One of the ways it happened during the next ten years was the way funding went, American style Corporatism...

**WC** The "if the private sector aren't funding you we're not funding you" routine...

**JK** ...the whole attitude of Ian McGregor and the people who came in the 70s. Remember the title







of McGregor's autobiography? *The Enemies Within*. A typical Thatcher/Reagan Cold War line. But before the Thatcher government we were already being put into that way of thinking so it's a mistake to say "Thatcherism". But between that and also as a way to control the arts—move it out of the public sector and into the private sector as a means to suppress or censor etc. BP [British Petroleum] was one of the major sponsors of theatre, they had the Young Director of the Year awards and so on. So as soon as you have groups taking control like that, funding becomes a functional thing. There's obviously ways in which slowly but surely avant garde theatre—never mind left-wing, radical political stuff—will slowly but surely...

**WC** ...know they're not wanted.

**JK** What's wanted is the Kings and Lyceum Theatre, the Citizens... Shakespeare and P.G. Wodehouse, foreign writers and Noel Coward, pantomimes—and style as well, what's cool, can I join the gang, give us a fucking Nike stripe. But what I was going to say is it is an error to fall into that way of thinking that says how before 1979 things were okay. It's crap. What you're talking about, the 7:84

company, Wildcat, that sort of thing... Really, it was just what you would say Labour Party. And it was probably Manifesto Labour Party, it wasn't even Tribune. None of that stuff was left-wing at all, not if you step outside the Labour Party. In some ways it was really reactionary theatre. As far as they were concerned, political theatre...as a musician friend of mine used to say... "If you walked out, sang a song and said Fuck the Queen, then you'd get described as political theatre, and you'd get funding." That was what it was about at that period. Or so he said, I don't actually believe you could've said that. It was mainly shit though. Real radical art, genuine left-wing art, I don't think it was a possibility. There was nothing much going on then. Maybe not all shite. But as far as being at the cutting edge of literature, christ, theatre's so old fashioned, it was then and it is now, compared to straight prose fiction, give us a break... No. Whereas it might be nice to see maybe John Byrne's work, *The Slab Boys* or something, it's not ever going to be accused of being too radical. Or like John McGrath's work. It has a place and all that but it's surely not going to be regarded as radical theatre! Or is it, who knows. You had a lot of pseudo stuff then, as you still get, like Scottish movies it's full of pseudo left-wing stuff. It's "working class"—it gets sold as that anyway, so called working class—and that gets equated with left-wing. But is it? A lot of it's just old fashioned naturalism, and naturalism is only a sort of weird fantasy. In literature that kind of stuff was out of date in the early 1950s for christ sake but this is what gets supported and funded in the year 2000 in the World of Drama, theatre and movies. It's fucking hopeless, apart from one or two exceptions, okay.

**WC** So you're saying you're never going to get a play on in Scotland?

**JK** The Tron theatre didn't even reply to the letters we sent them. Maybe the Arches would have been interested, they did *One-two-hey*. But we just felt this particular play should go to particular places. Theatres are different, the spaces are different. I remember that play of mine *Hardie and Baird*, it would have been great to see it at the Tron. I

couldn't imagine it at the Arches but who knows. It ran two weeks at the Traverse and it was selling out, and then that was that, it just finished, it never went anywhere else, it just died a death. I found that amazing. I know at that time in Glasgow...I'm sure nobody in theatre wanted to be at loggerheads with the Labour Party and Glasgow District Council—a major funding body—and that would've been that, putting a play of mine on, because of the situation at that time. Myself and you and a few others were anathema in those days Billy, Glasgow 1991...

**WC** Not just at that time!

**JK** Of course, and they've got longer memories than us. There's only been two plays of mine ever on in Glasgow, then the wee revival of *The Busker* a couple of years ago, the same company that were wanting to do this new one that's caused the bother. There would have been no chance of *Hardie and Baird* playing there in 1991. But maybe it wasn't political at all, nobody's got a right to get a play on, including me. I've got three plays just now, new ones, the one we've been talking about plus another two. Where do I go with them. I don't blame people like the Tron or the Citizens for not trying to stage my work because maybe they just don't want to stage it and they're entitled to that. In relation to what you're saying, I could see them putting on *Hardie and Baird* after I'm dead.

**WC** What because it's historical?

**JK** Yeah probably, that makes it safe. A couple of critics were amazed there was so much religion in it, they thought it was too much. But maybe that would make the Labour Party feel even more safe, if it was just religion, they would think there was no politics. I don't really know what's going on in Scottish theatre these days, I don't go very much. It's not just Scotland of course, it's elsewhere in the UK. A lot of things have happened. People down south are worried as well, it's not even politically radical, or experimental theatre, sort of "mainstream radical" where they're just trying to put on a new play or something.

**WC** Certainly there has been depressing changes in theatre and I think a lot of this is due to notions of nationality. The Arts Council want to devolve power—and that's quite laudable in some respects—but all that comes down to is you cut touring companies and rep. because you don't have a national body to encourage that. The National Companies receive about half the total funding budget. Moves that came in the wake of the Audit report which castigated all the big Lottery projects—it was really the Tories' appointees fault so you can't blame the present administration, well you never can, can you? perhaps that's why they change. Well it all centred on the Royal Opera House in '97, the failings there and the vacuum that created in the Arts Council, the ACE was on the brink of collapse. This occurred as the new government came in with all their new ideas as to where the money should flow. A lot of people react against them but for fuck's sake they gave these people millions and when they needed more they gave them more. But a lot of that was obviously politically motivated. Opera got the money, but they did it through unusual ways and got caught and fell out at a bad time. Important people had their chance first. They blew it. That's what happened. The report showed that the big companies fucked things up for the wee ones. Meanwhile a lot of cuts were made and the entire ACE Drama committee just packed it in, which saved them getting rid of them. I don't understand these resignations. They should have stayed and said "We're going to make life fucking difficult for you bastards," but they just resigned.

**JK** Are they not part of the career structure themselves, part of that group? I'm resisting using the term 'class'.

**WC** No. They're a committee to create the illusion of democratic decision-making. They have no power really. They realised that. That's the real reason why they resigned. Minutes were being withheld from them—the usual thing—decisions were taken behind people's backs.

**JK** I always feel that these kind of committees are doing their bit for their own kind of class.

**WC** That's certainly a motivation. It's all got to be seen as "we're all in it together."

**JK** If you think about the dispensation of Arts Council money in terms of class, the artists in a sense tend to be treated as working class. One of the ways that operates is like—take the £25,000 "Creative Scotland" bursary, the best I've ever seen for Scotland—the money would be the equivalent of an excellent working-class wage, a top tradesman. Whereas the bureaucrats are getting a middle class wage, an officer's wage, probably that starts from the £25,000 or just below. The arts administrators are the cultural officers, paid at the middle class level, but the artists get a working class wage, a hundred quid for a writer's fee, it's like an emergency call out for a plumber, a writer-in-residency, it's working class dough, fair enough. Part of it gets carried through with entire groupings so Scottish Opera, or Scottish Ballet or big Scottish theatres maybe, they get treated in middle class ways whereas other groups aren't, they'll be treated in a working class kind of way where they'll get the crumbs and fight for scraps, "community art".

**WC** TAG Theatre did commission an Edwin Morgan play then the SAC cut TAG's money. There are divisions of labour, but even the notion of being an artist and a writer. You know 'art critics should work for a nice responsible magazine', but I think there are tiers within tiers as well. Surely the lowest of the low are the poets and visual artists.

**JK** I don't think so. Well, it depends...

**WC** In Scotland?

**JK** Well it's often assumed that if you're a poet you're an academic or you're making a good income anyway, Robert Crawford or Eddie Morgan, Douglas Dunn. An interesting thing to look at is the level of award that Tom Paulin got in England, to go away and write a poem or work at a poem, he got about 75 grand, something like that, to go away for a year's sabbatical. Because he is assumed to be on their upper middle class level. In some establishment quarters they see a poet as somebody who is sort of dilettante—I hate that term, but to define it economically... These kind of poets have a huge income anyway in terms of the day-to-day work they do, and they create art in their spare time... So not the lowest of the low, the opposite from scum.

**WC** Well I think there's something in what I'm saying.

**JK** Yeah, I'm not generalising, most poets get treated badly

**WC** If I think about the visual arts, and I go into an art gallery, say the CCA in Glasgow. There's going to be a person sitting inside behind the desk, now I know that's an artist, that's somebody who's just left art school. And they're sitting there getting paid what, a fiver? Its almost like they're on display, "look, this is what happens to you if you become an artist," as if they are in the public stocks or left hanging on the gallows at the at the entrance to a city. Then there's the serious artist having an exhibition, but they're probably not really getting any money. Then there are all these people who hang the shows, they will probably be artists on the dole who also sit at the desk. Maybe people aspire to this sort of thing. It's replicated throughout all the major cities in Britain. Peculiarly everybody's getting paid, the person who cleans etc., except for artists. In the visual arts that's the way it works. Until as you say, you get to a certain level where you cross some kind of class aspiration thing...

**JK** Sometimes no, you think that's the case, but then it comes back and haunts you, as with this latest thing, you might get to a level but you never make that crossing, all the stuff you've done as an artist, as a writer, it's not opening these sorts of doors at all, you're still fighting all the time, I'm talking about just to do your work. So, you're back to—well...to introduce other people into that equation, I don't particularly want to, but if I was thinking really off the top of my head it would be people like Alasdair [Gray], Tom [Leonard] and Agnes [Owens], Jeff Torrington, Janice Galloway, even Crichton Smith before he died, people who either have no money to get on with things or else still have to chase around. There's no harm in artists like having to earn a living etc. but I don't see why at a certain stage they still have to be chasing around the country for paltry eighty quids here and a hundred quid there, people who have



produced all that great work. I think that's a scandalous thing. Alasdair not being able to finish *The Book of Prefaces* because he didn't have the money, meanwhile the Arts Council are dishing out...I mean where the fuck are the...who's getting it? Where does all the money go when someone like Alasdair, he couldn't finish the 'Prefaces' at that time because he didn't have enough money to get him through another year, he had to find private sponsoring, what's the fucking Arts Council for. These kind of questions which I don't really want to get into. Tom chasing up and down to England every week to survive, and Janice couldn't even do that, having a kid, and of course Jeff couldn't, and Freddie [Anderson] who's in his mid 70s. That brings you into other areas.

**WC** The funding culture, the Arts Council stuff: its obviously a deeply bourgeoisie, middle-class, don't rock the boat, status quo values...that's it.

**JK** And also Billy, the rent boy thing, that point you made—for them ultimately there is no belief whatsoever in art. And somebody whether it's myself, as with the theatre carry-on, it's how they have absolutely no belief in what you do. They put no value in the art you create. They still think that if they were to give you a bursary for example, it's just Kelman or Gray is getting £10,000...

**WC** You'd see the error of you're ways...

**JK** They would just...no, it's just how for them they're giving you ten thousand quid and somehow you're "getting away with something", you're just getting the money, it's not for anything, it's not even old rope, it's just a game, there's no value in what you do. There's no value in it, the Arts Council don't see it. Some people might talk about your work in a pub or something, yeah, the Arts Council officers know that, or maybe at least they'll see a book you've written on a shelf in a library, but they don't put any real value on the stuff you do, not in itself, they don't see it as art, not real art, there's no value in it

**WC** I don't think so. I don't think there is. If you look back to the original thinking with Keynes, it was Keynes that thought it up as an extenuation from ENSA, you know to help the troops (which gave us Stanley Baxter and Kenneth Williams), that was for the lower orders right. And CEMA was this thing which basically was designed to fund the big opera houses. The financial methodology was loans. It was never ever intended to be 'here's money on you go we will support you'...

**JK** Yeah that's a 70s thing.

**WC** Exactly. The notion of continuing funding. Now they're attacking that again. Keynes' notions are largely taken from an article in *The Listener*. His notion of artists were pretty muddled actually. The analogy is that they are like butterflies in a jar, give them money and they have freedom. It's quite flowery, apolitical...no social responsibility whatsoever. If they do still believe that they have also come to believe that if you let the butterfly out of the jar it'll go straight to the pub. That's what they think. If you give artists money they will spend it on their lives [laughter] they'll waste it, they'll pay bills with it. There is an anomaly there. I think at a very high level in the arts they have got to rediscover that the values of what we would call the 'counter-culture', all these things that were wrongfully ditched by the establishment, actually revived art. They refuse to deal with certain sets of issues because they call their own roles into question. Until they address these sorts of things and stop putting nutcases in charge because they're 'good businessmen' I can't see anything changing and remember they're doing themselves out of a job. Look at the BBC for instance. *It's* ethos has been commercialised. So it will compete with all these commercial imperatives. If that's what it's doing then why am I paying the license? It will only do in the whole basis of the thing. You pay your license fee so that it *doesn't* have to be ruled by commercial imperatives and it's the same with art's funding. I can't see any real way in a 'modern democracy' where they could say "we're going to have this fund which will force people to go along with the government's hastily constructed views on culture." That just doesn't make any sense. I want to believe there's a chance for them. I support the idea of an Arts Council in the same way I support the concept of the BBC. If you look at the ACE's website it says we will try and challenge this 'historical bias': they're penitent. But they're

right for the wrong reasons, they're just saying that because they're told to say it. They actually admit historical failure. But they're still not going to change things. Departments and individuals within the Arts Council are very different, but I don't think I've ever read anything which honestly conveys what it's like to encounter the sheer crippling madness of the bureaucracy...most people just give up.

**JK** You know I fought that damn thing for nine months, nine months wasted energy.

**WC** ...yeah see there's the time scale of these things. The day in day out...

**JK** One of these letters I wrote took about five or six days work—because I'm watching my back...you have to be careful... See I knew the attitude was going to be "Well what does he expect, he acts like the theatre's his or something I mean what right does he have to come walking in here!" That sort of attitude. These theatres are theirs, they belong to the admin officers, they've got nothing to do with us, the artists, that's the point. Well we knew that anyway that's just fucking banal. I landed myself in banalities for nine months. I got slapped down and put in my place. And how many times that has happened in the past for myself in this country, trying to get...you know...just get your work done.

**WC** What is the root cause?

**JK** What in other people's eyes?

**WC** Well if somebody as you say hasn't got a track record well they'll say maybe later. Somebody in the middle position who's getting treated like shit can themselves say 'aye maybe one day'...

**JK** When they're up there winning Scottish Writer of the Year Awards! ...No but it is outrageous. So just to try and get it made public, that this is the reality here, this is what we're actually talking about, I can't get a play on for fucking nothing, this is what it is like to be a writer in Scotland. None of that is discussed. Meanwhile we get the usual crap from *The Herald* and *The Scotsman*, or *Scotland on Sunday*, attacking writers about this...what's that one by Tom, their "feather bedded life of luxury..."

**WC** Yeah 'they're all getting funded and they're all moaning'. But that's just sad wankers who haven't got a clue...

**JK** Well they do have a clue...

**WC** What are you trying to tell me that they're saying this to create a...

**JK** Well some of the media are, yeah. And attacking people in a very underhand way. Just about every time I read a column about contemporary Scottish literature in *The Herald* we're getting attacked, in one way or another. I'm talking about the exciting stuff—all the reactionary crap gets supported. Look how they attacked Janice Galloway and Alasdair Gray in *The Scotsman*, or was it *Scotland on Sunday*? And when Janice and Alasdair replied they didn't even publish the letter they sent but again they attacked them, and they used bits of the letter for that purpose, imagine it, cowardly bastards. This is the kind of thing they do in Scotland. Imagine these little shits attacking writers like Alasdair and Janice! Christ almighty. Magnus Linklater is a former editor of *The Scotsman* anyway, but that's the Andrew Neil team nowadays and Linklater is nowhere near as bad as that, I don't think so, if he had been I wouldn't have written to him in the first place. Who knows. He's an ordinary kind of right-wing guy, I suppose, in a position of authority. Another one! But take people like...what's her name...writes for *The Herald* and does stuff all over the place, for the BBC... Her that's in the Labour Party, she's attacked me in the past because of Workers City, her that always backed up Pat Lally and whoever, the three stooges...

**WC** Oh what Ruth Wishart!

**JK** Yeah, people like Ruth Wishart, who have quite a strong position within the arts...

**WC** ...She's the Labour Party hatchet for the arts...

**JK** But these people really are the enemies in a sense, they try to hurt you and all that, and they

succeed. I don't get so hurt because I'm maybe in a stronger position, I regard myself as quite strong, and yet for people who are less...in a worse economic position...they can get hurt really badly you know, they get stopped, they can't do their work. At least I know next year will not be as bad because I'll be in Texas, Texas half the year, England the other half.

# zine & comics reviews

## Mark Pawson

Apologies if you missed this column in the last issue, I had a late summer break and popped over to New York to search out and track down some interesting print creations...

**Weird N.J.**—Your Travel Guide to New Jersey's Local Legends and Best Kept Secrets is a round up of odd architecture, forgotten theme parks, urban folklore and just plain weird goings on in New York's ugly sister state. Issue 14 features the Palace of Depression—a quirky landmark built in the 1930s out of junk and old car parts—and has a round up of boat-shaped buildings, a Cemetery Safari round-up, local Pirate tales, Roadside weirdness, kid's attractions and telegraph poles mysteriously adorned with sculptures. There's lots of lively input from their readers—always the sign of a good zine—but it's odd that they're not wise to the Andre the Giant graffiti campaign. Immensely readable, *Weird N.J.* is an engrossing look at an American state that rarely receives anything other than bad press.

Tuli Kupferberg, best known as a member of The Fugs, is an East Village counter culture survivor. On previous visits to New York I've always spotted him selling tapes and booklets on SoHo street corners, but this time around he was nowhere to be seen, maybe Mayor Giuliani's zero tolerance policies have driven him off the streets. Tuli finally gets his very own *Teach Yourself* book, this collection of 200 collages and cartoons is called **Teach Yourself Fucking**. It's idiosyncratic, loosely drawn and scrappily thrown together—just like his booklets always were, but maybe losing the sharper edge of his earlier publications and with a heavy focus on New York politics. 'The old Fucks at Home' is his continuing series of two oldsters trying to make sense of the world as it comes through their TV. There's also the satirical 'Great Moments in the History of Politics, Art, Literature, Journalism and Capitalism' cartoons. A couple of my favourites; cockroaches standing around discussing the merits of 'People Motels—where people check in, but don't check out' and Tuli's ad for the Village Voice personal column; 'Beautiful Woman! I saw you walking down village streets in the sixties. I should have spoken, but didn't. Please contact me.'

**Public Illumination Magazine**, celebrates 20 years of publishing with issue 46, this 'non-occasional' print oddity is tiny—just larg-



er than a business card. Each issue is themed, 'Busts' this time around, 'Luxury' for the next issue, and contains a mix of bite size prose, drawings, sketches and haikus. Originally New York based, editor Zagreus Bowery has relocated to Italy and continues to assemble this cute curiosity from works by contributors with equally unlikely, and obligatory pseudonyms; Crispy Prawns, Rank Cologne and Gulley A. Rosebush all feature in this issue. I've got a treasured collection of previous *Public Illuminations* stashed away, picked up on previous visits to New York and bought here in the 80s when copies were on sale in London, and look forward to rediscovering them when I file this copy...

**Cool (comics for you)** is a free tabloid showcasing recent and forthcoming books by some of today's most interesting independent comic publishers from the US, UK and Canada. It's a collaboration between *Top Shelf*, *Drawn and Quarterly*, *Highwater Books* and *Slab-o-Concrete*. The low cost newspaper format means there's plenty of space to print sample strips from all of the books featured, some in full colour. It's a great idea that they could easily charge money for, and let's be honest, it's always better to see work for yourself than have it filtered and part-digested by some reviewer!

**Vice** is a freebie skate/hip hop lifestyle magazine out of Canaduh & Brooklyn that distinguishes itself with a varied range of articles to amuse, offend and puzzle. Interspersed between the ads for overbranded leisure clothing and skate shoes for non-skaters (it is, after all produced by a chain of clothing stores...) there's articles on 'The Joy of Eavesdropping', an interview with a Strawberry Farmer (a real farmer not a band name), A Backstreet Boys Impersonator, Horror Rap? (there's a whole lot more where chart-topping 'Nem' came from), "I didn't wear a shirt for a month", East Timor and Porno Reviews, plus there's a glossy colour comics section with short strips from Kaz, Kochalka and Fiona Smyth. *Vice* have a helluva lot of fun with their do's and don'ts pages, featuring photos of cute guys and girls on the 'do's' page and mercilessly picking on style atrocities on the 'don'ts' page. *Vice* embodies an anything goes spirit, occasionally going too far, but they've got their name to live up to.

**Paper Rodeo**, is another tabloid freebie, out of Providence,



Rhode Island. A collection of some of the most disconcerting, dream-like, tripped out comics to be seen since the demise of Brighton's *Watermelon Comic*. I honestly can't tell if the strips are all by the same artist or ten different people! Ultra scratchy drawing styles are reminiscent of Gary Panter's Jimbo and with a nice touch, the adverts for local Providence cafes, galleries and bookshops are all done in matching styles. Apparently they have a whole catalogue of other work by the artists involved.

**Roctober** is one of my favourite music zines, previous themed issues have focused on Masked rock'n'roll, Monkey rock'n'roll and Midget rock'n'roll! I missed the last few issues, so was pleased to find this one in the racks at See Hear, New York's zine shop. *Roctober* #28 maintains their track record for outstanding cover artwork coupled with refreshingly low production values of the interior pages! This issue has a long feature on the risque comedy records of Redd Foxx—who also starred in the US TV remake of Steptoe & Son, and an exclusive interview with wholesome whitebread crooner Pat Boone! Plus there's articles on Dolemite, The Dickies, Andre Williams, Swamp Dogg, Maceo Parker and Brazilian superstar Xuxa. *Roctober* has a knack for finding interesting offbeat musicians neglected elsewhere and always has a dauntingly long reviews section.

I haven't reviewed any of **Mark Gonzales'** zines here, much as I'd like to, sorry Mark but at £20/\$20 a pop they're too expensive, hey but feel free to send review copies.

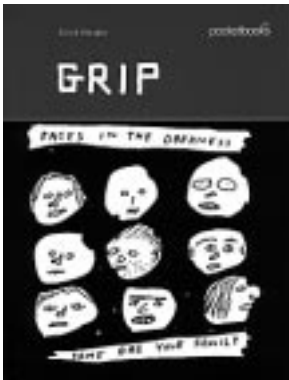
**Paul in the country** by Michel Rabagliati, is a delightful story which intersperses memories of the author growing up in french-speaking Quebec with a trip to the country, accompanied by his partner and young daughter, to visit his aging parents. Beautifully drawn in a clear-line european style, this is only the first comic book from Rabagliati—who has worked as an illustrator and graphic designer for the past 20 years. It's up to publisher Drawn and Quarterly's usual high standard, and on the basis of this comic I'm waiting eagerly for Rabagliati's forthcoming graphic novel *Paul has a Summer Job*.

Back in the UK now, **Weird Zines**, is a new reviews zine, Issue 1 covers some zines you'll be familiar with from this column (*Infiltration*, *Book Happy*, *From Parts Unknown*) together with an unhealthy dose of zines



focussing on trash, sleaze and exploitation cinema. Titles such as *Mansplat*, *Streetcleaner*, *The Exploitation Journal* and *Cashiers du Cinemart* give you a good idea of what these guys are into! Just 22 reviews seems a bit scanty, they could easily have squeezed a few more in here, but there's plenty of illustrations, and heck its only the first issue. Publishing a reviews zine is a thankless task at best, and previous attempts have fizzled out or floundered under mountains of mediocre zines sent to them, for this reason alone *Weird Zines* deserves your support.

**Everything's a Pound**, a survey of books weighing sixteen ounces avoirdupois, is both a practical examination of the size and weight of books (extremely pertinent to small publishers who rely on mailorder and are at the mercy of postage costs) and a homage to the Great British Pound Shop—which these days seems to be a global phenomena with every country having its equivalent, ¥100 shops in Japan and Americas 99¢ stores. *Everything's a Pound* is a balanced mixture of artists' books produced specifically for the project and existing publications which happen to weigh a pound or have been chopped down to size. Rodger Brown contributes a set of books weighing 8, 4, and 2 ounces—which can be used as weights, a slightly overweight copy of 'SPAIN-the rough



guide' has a corner sawn off by Martin Rogers to arrive at the correct weight and in the process gets retitled 'PAIN-the rough guide'. Everything is in the catalogue, including work that fails miserably to adhere to the theme from contributors who couldn't be bothered to read the instructions properly and work from metric-minded Europeans who don't know what a pound is! This book weighs in on target but seems overpriced at £5.00.

UK small press comics' stalwart John Bagnall's **A Nation Of Shopkeepers**, takes us on a walk down an early 1970's northern high street, calling in at the supermarket, chip shop, butchers and boutique along the way. Each tableau is crammed full of accurately observed period details and hideous seventies styles, fish and chips wrapped in real newspaper, green shield stamps in the supermarket, listening booths in the Record Shop, Jimmy Saville hairdos, carcoats, tanktops and flares are regulation issue. It's a very British and decidedly unglamorous trip down memory lane.

The latest book from the original badly-drawn boy, Scottish doodlemeister David Shrigley, **Grip**, is his largest yet and even has a colour section. This selection of drawings, ponderings, wonderings and meanderings seem bleaker and loopier than his earlier work, if that's possi-

ble. Shrigley's work deserves a book this size, so you can flick back and forth through it several times choosing your favourite pages and gradually working round to the rest of the book, just reading from start to finish doesn't seem appropriate. Buy a copy so he can afford some more packs of felt-tip pens off the market. *Grip* is published by Edinburgh's pocketbooks; steered by Alec Finlay they've built up an interesting, eclectic list of titles in a short time, several come with accompanying CDs, check out their catalogue.

### contacts

*A Nation Of Shopkeepers*, John Bagnall, 16 pgs, A5, £1.50, Beechnut Books. marc@corn-cob.co.uk

*Everything's a Pound*, A survey of books weighing sixteen ounces avoirdupois, 84 pgs, A4, £5.00. RGAP, Britannia Mill, Mackworth Road, Derby, DE22 3 BL. rgap@derby.ac.uk

*Roctober Comics and Music*, A4 80 pgs, \$4.00, 1507 E.53rd Street #617, Chicago, IL60615, USA. www.roctober.com

*Grip*, David Shrigley, 200pgs, £7.99+£1.20p+p, pocketbooks, Canongate Venture (5) New Street, Edinburgh, EH8 8BH. www.pbks.co.uk

*Paper Rodeo*, tabloid, 16pgs, free, send \$ for postage & a catalogue, Box 254, Allston, MA 02134, USA. Weird N.J.A4 80pgs,

\$4.00+postage, PO Box 1346, Bloomfield, NJ 07003, USA. www.weirdnj.com

*Paul in the country*, Michel Rabagliati, comic 32 pgs, \$3.50, Drawn and Quarterly, PO Box 48056, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2V 4S8. www.draw-nandquarterly.com.

*Teach Yourself Fucking*, Tuli Kupferberg, A4 192 pgs, \$15.00, Autonomedia, PO Box 568, Brooklyn, New York 11211-0568 USA. www.autonomedia.org

*Public Illumination Magazine*, \$1.50, 24pgs. Casa Sorci, 06044 Castel Ritaldi (PG) Italy. casasorci@krenet.it

*Weird Zines*, A5 24pgs. £1.50+an S.A.E. Justin Marriott, 159 Falcondale Rd, Bristol, BS9 3JJ Cool (Comics for You), tabloid, 28 pgs, free, 1536 West Randolph Street, Chicago, IL 60607, USA. www.coolbooks.com

*Vice*, Free, look out for copies in likely central London Record shops, or send £ for postage to Vice, 43 Lexington Street, London, W1R 3LG See Hear, 59 E 7th Street, New York



# United States and NATO inspired 'psychological warfare operations' against the 'Kurdish communist threat' in Turkey

Desmond Fernandes and Iskender Ozden<sup>1</sup>

The sheer extent to which the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) have been responsible for consciously and structurally providing aid, training and technical expertise to Turkish contra-guerrilla death squads, repressive state forces and far right fascist groups makes for chilling reading. In pursuit of US governmental and NATO Cold War and post Cold War agendas, secretive and often publicly unaccountable initiatives have been undertaken in order to organise, protect and support repressive and anti-democratic Turkish state military mechanisms in their targeting actions against the internal 'communist threat'. The internal 'communist threat', observes Chomsky, is "used here in the technical sense (which) has (been) assumed in American political discourse, referring to labour leaders, peasant organisers ... organising self-help groups, and anyone who has the 'wrong' priorities and thus gets in our way."<sup>2</sup> Kurdish 'nationalist' and/or pro-democratic/pro-socialist movements which have sought to defend peoples' labour and human/cultural/political rights within the region, and/or query the 'colonial/neo-colonial/pro-NATO/repressive' orientation of the militarised Turkish state, have similarly been targeted as 'communist threats'.<sup>3</sup>

## The Truman Doctrine, the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) and psychological warfare initiatives.

With the Truman Doctrine of 1947, millions of dollars worth of military equipment assistance was provided to the Turkish terror state to counter the *internal* and external 'communist threat.' As President Truman's address to Congress on March 12th, 1947, made all too clear: "I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by *armed minorities* or by outside pressures ... Should we fail Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far reaching to the West as well as to the East. We must take immediate and resolute action."<sup>4</sup>

By the end of fiscal year 1950, resolute action had been undertaken: Over US \$ 200 million in military aid had been received by Turkey, "along with 1,200 US military advisers."<sup>5</sup> Between 1950 and 1979, a further \$ US 5.8 billion in official military aid was forthcoming: "Arms supply and training programmes helped to integrate the Turkish military, police and intelligence services into those of the United States. Under the Military Assistance Programme, 19,193 Turks received US training between 1950 and 1979."<sup>6</sup> Lord Kinross, indeed, suggests that a much higher number of Turkish troops were, in fact, trained. By 1954 alone, "the American Military Mission claim(ed) to have trained, in the Turkish army, a force of thirty thousand technicians."<sup>7</sup>

US advisors also assisted Turkish authorities with their covert monitoring activities of Kurdish political prisoners. Musa Anter, for example, confirms—in his *Memoirs*—that a 'Special Team' from the US was sent in 1959 to the Turkish prison he was in, to assist the authorities with the decoding of messages between Kurdish prisoners.<sup>8</sup> Turkish



Interior Ministry reports further reveal that Turkish governing circles clearly understood that they would be provided with economic support and US military and political encouragement in their implementation of the on-going Kurdish genocide<sup>9</sup> as long as they could keep officially identifying the Kurds as a 'communist threat' to American officials (even at times when they clearly did not represent such a threat, and could not produce any evidence to the Americans to that effect): "This (Kurdish targeting) operation should be used ... to obtain economic aid from the US. The event should (merely) be represented to the American authorities as a 'Communist Kurd Movement'. To the relatives of the suspects (targeted), the event should be explained as a 'Communist Movement' (despite the fact that) ... so far, there's no evidence that can be used against the suspects."<sup>10</sup>

Ghassemlou and Kendal have also established that the US government, which was "in control of all (the) military decisions"<sup>11</sup> of a Cold War Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) Pact between Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Britain, had decided that a central purpose of this pact was to assist the Turkish and Iranian governments with their psychological warfare operations against "any attempts on the part of the Kurdish people."<sup>12</sup> As Randal has confirmed: "In the 1950's, the Baghdad Pact—re baptised CENTO when Iraq dropped out following the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958—amounted to Western approval of anti-Kurd animus, enshrined in the Saadabad Treaty of 1937."<sup>13</sup>

Besikci further argues that US government supported 'psychological' research projects were conducted in the 1960's in order to strategically assist the Turkish state with its assimilation and anti-Kurdish policies: "In 1962, Professor Frei, an American, carried out a survey throughout Turkey, in conjunction with the Bureau of Research and Testing at the Ministry of Education, and the US government's Agency for International Development (AID) ... From the information provided at the end of the research project, it becomes clear that American government officials proposed to the Turkish government that the best way to fight against the spread of the Kurdish struggle was through the creation and institutionalisation of a party based on religion."<sup>14</sup> As Besikci confirms, this advice "was taken seriously by the Turkish government."<sup>15</sup> There was also an apparent offer by the US government in 1962 to establish a 'Kurdish' radio station—costing US \$33 million—which would broadcast psychological warfare propaganda which would be anti-commu-

nist, anti-Kurdish nationalist in nature, and in keeping with "the USA and Turkey's ideology."<sup>16</sup>

## The CIA's role in covert action operations.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), moreover, began to covertly fund and train fascist paramilitary right wing gangs and virulently anti-Kurdish organisations in Turkey—including the Organisation to Fight Communism and the National Action Party (NAP/MHP)—along the 'successful' lines of the Bicchierai 'anti-communist' paramilitary gang in Italy. As Christopher Simpson has ascertained, "the role of this (Bicchierai) band"—which was financed by the CIA using 'black currency' which "came from captured German Nazi assets, including money and gold that the Nazis had looted from the Jews"<sup>17</sup>—"was beatings of left wing candidates and activists, breaking up political meetings and intimidating voters. Bicchierai's troops became the forerunners of a number of other similar paramilitary gangs funded by the CIA in Germany, Greece, Turkey and several other countries over the next decade"<sup>18</sup> which were used to destabilise wider democratic initiatives which were perceived to be inimical to US interests.

The ex-Director of the CIA, William Colby, has further conceded, when pressured, that "there is a possible CIA backing of (such) anti-Communist organisations to stop Turkey falling into the hands of communism."<sup>19</sup> Clearance to actively proceed with covert 'psychological' warfare of this nature was provided at the highest level. Through National Security Council (NSC) Directive 4-A in 1947, the CIA was "secretively authorised ... to conduct these officially non-existent programmes and to administer them."<sup>20</sup> As Simpson clarifies, "the NSC action removed the US Congress and public from any debate over whether to undertake psychological warfare abroad. The NSC ordered that the operations themselves be designed to be 'deniable,' meaning 'planned and executed (so) that any US government responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorised persons and that if uncovered, the US government can positively disclaim any responsibility.'"<sup>21</sup>

National Security Council Directive 10/2 (NSC 10/2), which replaced NSC-4A in 1947, similarly authorised the Office of Policy Co-ordination (OPC)—"the covert action arm of the CIA"<sup>22</sup>—to carry out "any covert activities related to propaganda; preventative direct action including sabotage ... (and) assistance ... (in) support of *indigenous anti-Communist elements in threatened countries of the free world*."<sup>23</sup> As Frank Wisner, the head of OPC (dubbed the United States' Psychological Warfare Organisation by the NSC)<sup>24</sup> has since conceded, these operations were "conducted in a covert or clandestine manner to the end that official US interest or responsibility" in these terrorist 'anti-Communist' actions could be "plausibly disclaimed by this government."<sup>25</sup> The OPC's psychological warfare objectives, according to Wisner, included:

"1. Political warfare including ... support of *indigenous anti-Communist elements in threatened countries of the free world*.

2. *Psychological warfare including 'black' and 'grey' propaganda.*<sup>26</sup>

3. Economic Warfare.

4. *Guerrilla and partisan-type warfare.*

5. *Sabotage and counter-sabotage.*

6. *Other covert operations.*<sup>27</sup>

It is important at this juncture to also clarify just what 'psychological warfare', as termed above, actually meant. To Christopher Simpson, who has analysed much declassified material related to the above issues:

"the primary object of US psychological operations during this period was to frustrate the ambitions of radical movements in resource rich developing countries seeking solutions to the problems of poverty, dependency and the entrenched corruption ... At heart, modern (US) psychological warfare has been a tool for managing empire, not for settling conflicts in any fundamental sense. It has operated largely as a means to ensure that indigenous democratic initiatives in the Third World and Europe do not go 'too far' from the standpoint of US security agencies ... The problem with (US) psychological warfare is ... its consistent role as an instrument for maintaining grossly abusive social structures ...

"Several points should be underlined. First, psychological warfare in the US conception has consistently made use of a wide range of violence, including *guerrilla warfare*, *assassination*, *sabotage* and more fundamentally, the maintenance of manifestly brutal regimes in client states abroad. Second, it has also involved a variety of propaganda or media work, ranging from overt (white) newscasting to covert (black) propaganda ..."

Re-examination of (the US) record, even as it applies to Turkey, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, the Philippines, Indonesia and Panama, inescapably leads Simpson in short order to an heretical conclusion:

"The role of the United States in world affairs during our lifetimes has often been rapacious, destructive, *tolerant of genocide* and willing to sacrifice countless people."<sup>28</sup>

In the case of Turkey, there are clear indications that the US government directly facilitated the Turkish government's genocidal programme against the Kurds through its endorsement of the CENTO pact, its provision of military equipment and its training of state backed 'anti-Kurdish' psychological warfare death squads, intelligence gathering organisations and 'commando' groups.<sup>29</sup>

Marcus Raskin, an NSC staffer, has conceded that these psychological warfare "activities around the world ... were criminal by other nations' standards as well as criminal by our own."<sup>30</sup> To George McGovern, US senator between 1963-81:

"We were involved in assassinations, assassination attempts. We were operating paramilitary operations with mercenary forces hired in other people's countries with no knowledge on the part of our own Congress, our press or the American people. All of these things are alien to a system of constitutional democracy."<sup>31</sup>

Recently declassified 'Psychological Warfare' methods used by the US Army and CIA advisers during the early Cold War years again confirm that the army's operational definition of the 'psychological warfare' it was actively engaged in—be it in Turkey, Italy, Greece or Iran—clearly *did* include terrorist acts of "warfare" that "*employs all moral and physical means, other than orthodox military operations* ... Psychological Warfare," as recommended and practised, must "employ any weapon to influence the mind of the enemy. The weapons are psychological only in the effect they produce and not because of the nature of the weapons themselves. *In this light, overt (white),*

*covert (black) and grey propaganda; subversion; sabotage; special operations; guerrilla warfare; espionage; political, cultural, economic and racial pressures are all effective weapons.* They are effective because they produce dissension, distrust, fear and hopelessness in the minds of the enemy."<sup>32</sup> Psychological warfare 'special operations' were defined in the above context to additionally include "miscellaneous operations such as *assassination* (and) *target capture*."<sup>33</sup>

According to Philip Agee, a former senior CIA secret operations officer, CIA stations regularly used "offensive weapons of psychological and paramilitary operations" which involved surveillance measures and "include(d) the placing of anti-Communist propaganda in the public media, the frame-up of ... officials for police arrest, the publishing of false propaganda attributed to the revolutionary group in such a way that it will be difficult to deny and damaging as well, the organising of goon squads to beat up and intimidate ... (people) ... using ... harassment devices to break up meetings, and the calling on liaison services to take desired repressive action."<sup>34</sup>

"Within the US governmental bureaucracy itself," notes Peter Dale Scott, "intelligence agencies and special warfare elements have recurrently exploited," trained and even protected "drug traffickers and their corrupt political allies" to facilitate these types of "anti-Communist and anti-subversive operations."<sup>35</sup>

As Adams has concluded in '*Secret Armies*', the US military and "the CIA ... under the single OPC umbrella ... managed to embrace every aspect of covert warfare from espionage to psychological operations and subversion."<sup>36</sup> Widespread and chilling actions and atrocities against Kurdish communities and 'radical' human rights and 'leftist' activists in Turkey/North West Kurdistan were clearly committed as a consequence of these 'anti-communist' inspired US-CIA-NATO linked 'psychological warfare' training and operational programmes.<sup>37</sup> To Jeffrey Bale, writing in the *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* and *Lobster*, the CIA was "instrumental in establishing the contra-guerrilla" death squads in Turkey.<sup>38</sup> By 1969, moreover, Turkish "commandos, who had been trained by American specialists in counter-insurgency," were despatched into Kurdish regions "under the pretext of a general 'arms search'" to terrorise the population.<sup>39</sup> These commando actions "rapidly became associated with arbitrary brutality and torture that had marked the suppression of Kurdistan four decades earlier."<sup>40</sup>

According to the journal *Devrim*, one commando report which focused upon its anti-Kurdish psychological warfare operations, ran along the following lines:

"Since the end of January, special military units have undertaken a land war in the (Kurdish) regions of Diyarbakir, Mardin, Siirt and Hakkari under the guise of hunting bandits. Every village is surrounded at a certain hour, its inhabitants rounded up. Troops assemble men and women separately, and demand the men to surrender their weapons. They beat those who deny possessing any or make other villagers jump on them. They strip men and women naked and violate the latter. Many have died in these operations, some have committed suicide. Naked men and women have cold water thrown over them, and they are whipped. Sometimes women are forced to tie a rope around the penis of their husband and then to lead him around the village. Women are likewise made to parade naked around the village. Troops demand villagers to provide women for their pleasure and the entire village is beaten if the request is met with refusal."<sup>41</sup>

These actions, which have mirrored those of other US inspired and trained commando groups



in El Salvador, East Timor, Indonesia, Guatemala, South Vietnam and Nicaragua, followed a "general pattern ... A village is surrounded by armoured cars and helicopters move ahead; all the villagers are rounded up without any explanation, then herded into specially prepared camps. They are then called upon to surrender their weapons. Should a peasant declare that he has none, he is severely beaten and humiliated. The Turkish troops force both men and women to strip; often they rape the women. 'Suspects' are hanged by their feet from a gallows. Sometimes strings are attached to the genitals of naked men whom the women are then forced to lead through the streets in this manner. Many die under torture."<sup>42</sup>

Kendal confirms that these targeting actions continued throughout the 1970's:

"During the more or less fascist period which followed the military coup on March 12th, 1971, the commandos' activities were considerably extended and became a real 'Kurd-hunt'. The troops raked through the Kurdish provinces one by one: several thousand peasants were pursued, arrested and tortured ... in counter-insurgency centres which had been set up by Turkish officers *trained by the US in Panama* ... (When) Demirel (who went on to become president of Turkey) returned to power ... commando operations started up with renewed intensity in Kurdistan. In the towns, the state police and the fascist militias assassinated sixty people from March 31st, 1975 to April 10th, 1976 ... Even under the 'democratic parliamentary regime' of the late seventies, the commandos were still at work in Kurdistan. There were more than 10,000 of them patrolling the frontier province of Hakkari from October to December 1975."<sup>43</sup>

Despite being aware of such atrocities, US-NATO funding, active training and protection of racist and fascist, genocidal, anti-Kurdish psychological warfare teams and militias continued. One such militia was "the CIA/drug-linked terror gang known as the Grey Wolves," the "paramilitary arm" of the National Action Party (NAP/MHP).<sup>44</sup> According to Berch Berberoglu, "attacks by the CIA trained and equipped death squads of the fascist NAP intensified during 1979."<sup>45</sup> A report by the Turkish Internal Ministry acknowledges that these NAP death squads were ideologically "akin to Hitler's Nazi organisation."<sup>46</sup> NAP supporters, for instance, were clearly encouraged in a 1977 party leaflet to act in the following fashion: "Those who destroyed (the Ottoman Empire) were Greek-Armenian-Jewish converts, Kurds, Circassians, Bosnians and Albanians. As a Turk, how much longer will you tolerate these dirty minorities? Throw out the Circassian, that he may go to Causasia, throw out the Armenian, throw out and kill the Kurd, purge from your midst the enemy of all Turkdome."<sup>47</sup>

As Kendal has clarified, "the NAP is violently and militantly anti-Kurdish ... The liquidation of the Kurds is thus an integral part of their agenda."<sup>48</sup>

Investigative research by Celik has uncovered the following details: "The intelligence services of (NATO ally) Germany and other European coun-

tries ... protected the NAP/MHP,"<sup>49</sup> despite being fully aware of the ideological slant and character of the organisation. "This protection continues to this day. The CIA openly protected the NAP/MHP in Germany ... One of the 'protectors' was the CIA man Ruzi Nazar," who had previously "collaborated with German Nazi occupation forces in the Second World War ... NAP/MHP militants were used in hundreds of murders, became very professional, and were used by the CIA in international terrorism."<sup>50</sup>

According to *Counterspy*,<sup>51</sup> the CIA—as part of its ongoing psychological warfare training strategy in Turkey—also "assisted Milli Istihbarat Teskilati (MIT)," the notorious Turkish national intelligence agency, "in 1960-69 in drafting plans for mass arrests of opposition figures similar to the pattern followed in Thailand, Indonesia and Greece. In a single night, generals ordered 4,000 professors, students, teachers and retired officers (to be) arrested. They tortured (many) ... The coup" in Turkey in 1971 "was also carried out by counter-guerrilla, the CIA, the Turkish military and Turkish military intelligence (MIT)."<sup>52</sup> From its station in Athens, Greece, the CIA Technical Services Division (TSD) support group provided particular psychological warfare operational expertise to its staff operating in Turkey. "TSD assistance," Roubatis and Wynn conclude, "included electronic monitoring devices, various gadgets for surveillance, *special weapons for clandestine operations, drugs for use in such operations, forged documents and other similar material* ... The TSD activities involved aggressive operations."<sup>53</sup>

The CIA's role in assisting MIT in targeting actions against the 'Kurdish' and other 'internal communist' threats was publicly exposed in 1977 when Sabahattin Savasman, the deputy director of MIT, acknowledged that "the CIA has a delegation of at least 20 people who co-operate in the MIT with the CIA and who occupy high positions inside the MIT. They supply information, contacts and they participate in operations ... All technical equipment is supplied by the CIA. A lot of personnel was trained by the Americans in courses abroad, the buildings were constructed by the CIA, the instructors were supplied by the CIA ... The employees have been working for years as CIA agents for the benefit of the American secret service."<sup>54</sup> He further stated that "MIT personnel have been accepting payments and taking part in operations with the CIA for years."<sup>55</sup>

Zurcher confirms that MIT's operations against 'internal threats' during this period were clearly and publicly known to be of a brutal nature: "Widespread reports of torture" of Kurds and other 'communist activists' "in so-called 'laboratories', torture chambers of the MIT," exist.<sup>56</sup> Aldrich Ames, a former CIA officer who was stationed in Turkey, has also acknowledged that "the Turkish intelligence service (MIT) was cash-strapped, so we gave it half a million dollars worth of wiretap equipment and taught its people how to use it"<sup>57</sup> against its 'internal threats'. MIT's own leader, General Ziya Selisik, confirmed in 1962 that its internal "communist" threats even included "all Kurds who were studying."<sup>58</sup> It should also be noted at this point that Sait Elci, who was the leader of the underground 'Kurdistan Democratic Party—Turkey' (KDP-T) during the late 1960's, had—just before his assassination by Dr. Sait 'Siwan' Kirmizitoprak—accused the latter of acting as a Kurdish double-agent for the CIA. Elci was convinced that Dr. Sait 'Siwan' Kirmizitoprak

was working to fulfil the agendas of a joint CIA-MIT operation.<sup>59</sup>

Jeffrey Bale further confirms that "there are numerous connections between the CIA and (the fascist) MHP (NAP), both in Turkey and Europe. It seems clear that the CIA and US military intelligence"—via these 'collaborative' psychological warfare operations with the virulently anti-Kurdish MHP—"made use of civilian 'idealists' (fascist hard-liners) by recruiting them into the contra-guerrilla (death squad) organisations, and former Turkoman SS man Ruzi Nazar has been identified by several investigators as the liaison between CIA personnel, including Henze (a CIA Turkey Station Chief) himself and the MHP Leadership in West Germany."<sup>60</sup>

It is also worth noting at this point that the successive CIA directors who were involved in initiating and overseeing these disquieting psychological warfare operations were well suited to their additional tasks of 'covering up' these actions from the public gaze. According to Loftus and Aarons, for example, CIA Director Allen Dulles<sup>61</sup> "State Department files show that he was the man (previously) assigned to cover up the Armenian massacre (genocide) ... Simpson's research<sup>62</sup> (also) fully documents the equally repugnant cover-up engineered by Dulles and his sources during the Jewish Holocaust of World War II."<sup>63</sup>

## The Pentagon and NATO's 'stay behind' network

Under the Pentagon's confidential 1948 plan for the formation of a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) styled structure, it is also instructive to note that one of the five major objectives of the emerging military alliance would be to ensure that no *internal* or external threat to the current "political independence (sic) or territorial integrity of Turkey"<sup>64</sup> would be entertained. Kurdish aspirations for basic cultural and political rights—within a democratic, federal, Turkish or independent Kurdish structure—would clearly, under these criteria, have been considered psychological 'threats' which needed to be eradicated using all necessary means.

With the eventual formation of NATO in 1949 and Turkey's membership of the alliance in 1952, Turkey's military forces and several right wing fascist organisations were concretely provided with even greater covert support in their 'anti-Communist' war against Kurdish cultural and political rights and other pro-democratic 'liberal', 'leftist' and trade unionist movements. General Sir Walter Walker, former NATO Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces, Northern Europe, confirms that "Kurdish activists" were, indeed, being identified as "Marxist" communist 'internal' threats to the 'territorial integrity' of the Turkish Republic: "Turkey's Kurdish leaders have *refused to be assimilated. The (Kurdish) revolt in the eastern provinces was the single most challenging security problem in the country, and in addition to that, it was notable that Kurds were playing a leading role in Marxist-Leninist groups that were ideologically ... based.*"<sup>65</sup>

Through the protective curtain and secretive cover of a wider 'anti-Communist' NATO 'Gladio' styled 'Operation Stay Behind' Psychological Warfare network—which was "spearheaded by the CIA ... (and) conceived by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff according to a 1976 senate report on the CIA by Frank Church which first revealed its existence"<sup>66</sup>—a 'contra (counter) guerrilla' force called Seferberlik Taktik Kurulu (STK—"Tactical Mobilisation Group") was funded, organised and allowed to operate from the same Ankara building that housed the US Military Aid Mission.<sup>67</sup>

According to Roth and Taylan, the training of officers assigned to this Psychological Warfare Group "begins in the US and then continues inside Turkey under the direction of CIA officers and military 'advisers'."<sup>68</sup> By 1959, a further military accord between the US and Turkey agreed upon the 'use' of the contra-guerrillas "also in the case of an *internal rebellion* against the regime."<sup>69</sup> Six years later, with the restructuring of the STK into the OHD (Ozel Harp Dairesi—Special Warfare Department),<sup>70</sup> the contra-guerrilla psychological warfare and death squad structures were placed under the authority of the president



of General Staff.<sup>71</sup> Significant US funding of this structure, at least until 1974, was confirmed by the current Turkish Premier Bulent Ecevit, who additionally stated that "patriotic volunteers were members of the group. They were trained specially to launch a counter guerrilla operation."<sup>72</sup>

These 'operations', Turkish army spokesmen have recently conceded, were explicitly involved in anti-Kurdish actions.<sup>73</sup> A directive by General Sabri Yirmibesoglu,<sup>74</sup> who was a leading figure in the OHD during the 1970's, describes the types of psychological warfare activities which were being actively encouraged at the time of CIA 'grant-funding' and training: "Use 'open' as well as 'covert' activities, murder, bombing, armed robbery, torture, kidnapping; encourage incidents which invite retaliation; take hostages; use sabotage and propaganda; disseminate disinformation (and) use force as well as blackmail."<sup>75</sup>

With ex-CIA director William Colby's admission that "there is also such an organisation ('Gladio—Stay Behind') in Turkey,"<sup>76</sup> General Dogan Beyazit (President of Turkey's General Staff) and General Kemal Yilmaz (Commander of its psychological warfare 'Special Forces'), were forced to confirm that this secretive and 'special' NATO organisation—which had been plausibly denied by Turkish officialdom and military sources until 1990—*did* exist.<sup>77</sup> Ecevit further revealed on November 13th, 1990, that "I was told that it was financed by the United States ... I was also told that the organisation had secret weapons depots. Its members were trained in special warfare techniques."<sup>78</sup> In a more recent interview with Julie Flint, Ecevit clarified issues further: "Certain unhealthy kinds of measures were taken for internal security. Too many covert actions obviously took place. I'm afraid such events have taken place in many other NATO countries also."<sup>79</sup>

As Celik and others have ascertained, training of death squads was clearly undertaken by the OHD-CIA-NATO linked structure, and US psychological warfare and contra-guerrilla manuals were used<sup>80</sup>—as they were in other 'Gladio - Stay Behind' structures elsewhere in Europe—after having been translated into Turkish: "The 'special war methods' which (were) taught supposedly for the prevention of a communist occupation include among others 'assassinations, bombings, armed robbery, torture, attacks, kidnap, threats, provocation, militia training, hostage taking, arson, sabotage, propaganda, disinformation, violence and extortion.'"<sup>81</sup>

Investigative research has also established that "selected elements of the(se) Turkish contra-guerrillas, together with the generals, were all trained in contra-guerrilla" and psychological warfare "schools in the USA ... During their training, the contra-guerrilla forces ... learn how to handle explosives under the supervision of Green Berets in Matamoros near the Mexican border, and they are taught how to kill, stab or strangle somebody silently, etc."<sup>82</sup> Other places where Turkish officials are trained are the Escuela de los Americas in Panama, which is attached to the US base Southern Comfort, the Police Academy near Washington and the Schongau and Oberammergau bases in Germany.<sup>83</sup> According to a report by Republican Peoples Party (CHP) deputy, Fikri Saglar, "the links between the illegal right wing organisations and the Turkish security should be traced back to Gladio."<sup>84</sup>





Reports in the *Turkish Daily News* (13 July 1994),<sup>85</sup> furthermore, confirm that OHD linked Turkish military officials, commanders and Chiefs of Staff continue to be briefed, advised and even awarded 'Legion of Merit' medals by US Pentagon staff, high ranking members of the US armed forces and psychological warfare organisations including the US Army 'Special Operations Command'. The US Army 'Special Operations Command' houses "such specialised psychological warfare command groups as the Army Rangers, Navy Seal Teams, Special Boat Units and the 23rd Air Forces 'Special Operations Force'." <sup>86</sup> OHD linked officials such as Karadayi (until recently, Turkey's Chief of Staff) have officially liaised with senior US counter-insurgency 'experts' and officers at Fort Bragg, Fort Knox and Goldman Army airfield.<sup>87</sup> It has also been established that Huseyin Kocadayi, Chief of the Special Forces in Hakkari (in South-East Turkey/North West Kurdistan) and Deputy Chief of Police in Diyarbakir, who has been identified as "one of the most bloody enemies of the people who organised the units of the '*head-hunters*' in Kurdistan ... was trained at a CIA school in the US."<sup>88</sup>

The Human Rights Watch Arms Project has additionally exposed the way in which "US troops, aircraft and intelligence personnel have remained at their posts throughout Turkey, *mingling with Turkish counterinsurgency troops and aircrews in southeastern bases such as Incirlik and Diyarbakir ... throughout Turkey's wide-ranging scorched earth campaign*" against Kurdish civilian settlements and PKK hideouts/encampments.<sup>89</sup> This campaign, indeed, has assumed genocidal proportions.<sup>90</sup> Human Rights Watch's concern over this type of support has led to its public request to the US government to "order an inquiry into all training, joint manoeuvres, liaison and other interforce activities undertaken since 1990 by US military special operations forces with Turkish forces, with a view to identifying the Turkish units involved and the nature of US special operations training and doctrine imparted to them."<sup>91</sup>

Brigadier General Kemal Yilmaz, head of OHD, has also recently conceded that the OHD co-operates with NATO on 'technical issues' and that, at times, it has joined NATO's training programmes in Turkey and abroad.<sup>92</sup> Its psychological warfare operations function, under the redesigned term Special Forces Command (SFC), according to Yilmaz, "is to support the operation of the Turkish Armed Forces with its '*irregular warfare activities*' by preparing plans and executing the activities of war preparedness during peacetime. During wartime, SFC is responsible to establish the *irregular local forces* and to 'manage and control' these forces under the directives of the Chief of Staff's Office ... The units also are trained regularly by various NATO-member countries. SFC commandos are trained with the most advanced weapons of the world."<sup>93</sup>

The nature of the SFC's establishment of psychological warfare 'irregular local forces' (i.e. assassination squads) and of their 'management and control' structures were partly revealed in a 1995 report by a commission of Turkish MPs which sought to investigate more than 600 assassinations which had taken place in the south east of the country (north west Kurdistan) between 1991-1995. The report, which hard-liners sought to 'cover up', quoted a police chief in Batman as acknowledging that assassins ('contra-guerrillas') at war with the 'Marxist-Leninist' Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), had, indeed, received training from Turkish military units. There was also a clear acknowledgement that assassins and irregular forces were said to be living in security forces accommodation, from where they committed murders. "Sometimes they were arrested, but most of these incidents were covered up," it concluded.<sup>94</sup>

**US-NATO 'psychological warfare' connections with anti-Kurdish agencies, 'death-teams' and fascist organisations**

MIT Deputy, Sabahattin Savasman, has confirmed that

the intelligence service of Turkey's NATO partner, West Germany, regularly liaised with MIT and held meetings with the organisation in Munich and Ankara to discuss and evaluate operational matters and Turkey's "internal" problems.<sup>95</sup> NATO countries, moreover, have apparently actively engaged in the training of anti-Kurdish "death-teams",<sup>96</sup> called 'Special Teams'. A recent Celik investigation uncovered the following:

"In 1985, a force was set up to counter Kurdish guerrilla warfare. It was known as the 'Special Team'. Even at the beginning, the unit numbered 5,000 ... For 9 months, the personnel were trained in the use of the most effective weapons and in the use of guns, torture, sabotage, plotting, interrogation, camouflage and learning about the culture and traditions of the people in the regions they were to serve in ...

"Some Special Team members were trained in other NATO countries such as Germany ... An army officer from Germany, Hauptmann Weygold, was interviewed by a Turkish newspaper called '*Tercuman*' on 1st February, 1987. He informed the paper that he had 'trained 2 groups of Turkish Special Team units at St. Augustine in GSG-9 camp, near Bonn.' The German newspaper, '*Suddeutsche Zeitung*', in its 31st March-1st April, 1987 edition, also stated that 3,000 Special Team members from Turkey—also known as 'Black Insects'—were trained in West Germany ... Special Teams were trained ideologically and in militaristic terms to look upon Kurdish people as enemies ... In their manifesto, Special Teams are described as 'Special Activity Teams'. They may join in with Turkish army units in operations. They also had other different assignments. An army unit might surround a group of guerrillas in a village but the Special Teams were trained to then take over the operation. It was usually their job to carry out extermination operations ... or ... mine ... or set traps on roads, interrogate, torture and lead operations in disinformation. There are hundreds of people in Kurdistan disabled as a result of the treatment and operations of the Special Teams ... Special Teams have also executed guerrillas even though it was clearly possible to arrest them. In raids, they have raped women, seized gold and money and treated people brutally."<sup>97</sup>

Randal confirms that "the so-called Special Teams, whose members often wore civilian clothes ... were feared as the cruellest of the cruel."<sup>98</sup>

Turkish state collusion with anti-Kurdish, fascist and Nazi collaborationist criminal gangs also appears to have been actively encouraged and promoted by the US and NATO 'Gladio-styled' Stay Behind Network. As Simpson's study, '*Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazi's and its Effect on the Cold War*', has ascertained, events in "Greece in 1947 and Italy in 1948 also taught the CIA that it could employ former Nazi collaborators" and other fascists "on a large scale in clandestine" and psychological warfare "operations and get away with it. US national security planners appear to have concluded that extreme right wing groups that once collaborated with the Nazis should be included in US sponsored anti-Communist coalitions, for the participation of such groups became a regular feature of US covert operations in Europe in the wake of the Greek and Italian events."<sup>99</sup>

In Turkey, this resulted, in the opinion of Supreme Court Justice Emin Deger, in the endorsement of a close working collaboration between the fascist and anti-Kurdish Nationalist Action Party (NAP/MHP) armed 'commandos', or 'Bozkurts', and the Turkish state's CIA and NATO linked 'counter guerrilla' units.<sup>100</sup> This collaboration directly led to "NAP commandos" being "trained by the CIA."<sup>101</sup> The leader of NAP, observes Lee, was Colonel Alparslan Turkes, an "enthusiastic supporter of Hitler during World War Two."<sup>102</sup> As Harris has ascertained, "during the Second World War, he had been leader of the Pan-Turkish movement which backed Hitler in exchange for financial support from Berlin and in the hope that a victorious Reich would allow Turkey to annex those parts of the Soviet Union inhabited by people of Turkish origin."<sup>103</sup> It is also known that "Turkes established close ties with Nazi leaders in Germany in 1945 and ... maintained his contacts" in the post Second World War period "with the German neo-Nazi underground."<sup>104</sup>

Despite clear awareness of his pro-Nazi past and highly disturbing, fascist and racist anti-Kurdish leanings, it is instructive to note that NATO welcomed and did not seek to dispute his placement as Head of the NATO Department of the Armed Forces Headquarters in Turkey by 1960, or his role as a principal liaison officer between the Turkish General Staff and NATO in its operational activities.<sup>105</sup> CIA inspired support for the NAP and Grey Wolves' objectionable and murderous activities has been detailed in a number of investigative reports. Brodhead, Friel and Herman, for example, draw upon a number of reports which detail the way in which "Frank Terpil, the CIA agent and international arms dealer, had supplied the NAP and the Grey Wolves with weapons and explosives in the mid 1970's"<sup>106</sup> to proceed with their terrorist 'activities'. These activities, Kendal and Celik observe, had resulted in the murder of over 200 Kurdish and Turkish 'leftist' students by 1978, as well as a number of trade unionists, teachers and influential thinkers.<sup>107</sup> NAP, in return for this type of 'psychological warfare support' in its anti-Kurdish and 'anti-communist' offensives, had, not unexpectedly, "pledged(ed) to abide by accords with international organisations like NATO."<sup>108</sup>

It should additionally be noted that Grey Wolves fascist paramilitary groups, which were engaged in terrorist actions against Kurdish community groups and 'Kurdish/Leftist activists', were further encouraged to forge active and collaborative operational links with the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations, another CIA backed 'anti-communist/anti-radical' coalition led by former fascist World War Two collaborators from Eastern Europe.<sup>109</sup> Colleagues of Turkes were, equally disturbingly, placed in control of a Turkish chapter of the World Anti-Communist League (WACL), "an umbrella group that functioned as a cat's paw for US intelligence" and US psychological warfare operations "in Latin America, Southwest Asia and other Cold War battlegrounds."<sup>110</sup>

Celik has also ascertained that "the German writer Jurgen Roth had information obtained from the German police and claimed in his book, '*Die Verbrechen Holding*', that MHP (NAP) was a branch of the Turkish (CIA-NATO) Gladio Organisation."<sup>111</sup> In this capacity, MHP/NAP has been able to obtain support and protection from the intelligence agencies of NATO countries: "With very few exceptions, no court cases have been opened against the Party in Western European countries. It is protected in Europe, even though it is at the centre of the drugs trade. This protection is particularly strong in Germany. Right-wing German politicians, especially those in Bavaria, protect the Party. It is impossible that German intelligence should be ignorant of this, since it has been proven that they gave support to the Party in the 1970's. Turkes used Germany as his base before he died, visiting it several times a year and holding big meetings there. These meetings have never been the subject of German legal proceedings ... The German authorities ... have shown no concern over the Nationalist Action Party. It is clear that there is organised protection. The Party also finds Belgium, Holland and the UK to be countries in which it can comfortably organise."<sup>112</sup>

Recent revelations after the Susurluk car incident further point towards a 'Turkish Gladio' US-NATO connection with the late Abdullah Catli, a Grey Wolves-NAP 'anti-Kurdish', anti-Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) contra-guerrilla/OHD death squad organiser;<sup>113</sup> who was also a convicted drug smuggler and dealer<sup>114</sup> and colleague of the Italian Gladio and Aginter Press terrorist, Stefano Delle Chaie.<sup>115</sup>

According to an Italian investigative journalist "who had helped uncover the international Gladio network ... Catli was affiliated with the central figures of Italy's notorious (CIA-NATO linked) Gladio organisation. Catli, Agca and Celik ... an old friend of Abdullah Catli who had been implicated in several cases of political killings along with Catli and Mehmet Ali Agca, 'the man who shot the Pope', ... were operating under CIA guidance."<sup>116</sup> An Aydinlik investigation further reveals that "French journalist Jean-Mari Stoerkel said that he had deter-





mined beyond any doubt that Abdullah Catli and Oral Celik ... had been used by Western secret services. He said that Catli and Celik had been doing business with another Turk, Bekir Celenk, who in turn was working with Henry Arsan, a man who co-operated with the CIA and with a number of secret organisations, fascist groups and terrorist gangs.<sup>117</sup> CIA agent Frank Terpil is also reported to have publicly confirmed his involvement in helping to illegally release the extremist Grey Wolf, Agca.<sup>118</sup>

According to Herman and Brodhead, there can be no denying that "there was a close tie between the counter-guerrilla and the CIA. Deger charged further that the CIA, acting through MIT and the counter-guerrilla, promoted right-wing" psychological warfare "terrorist actions to destabilise the Turkish government and to prepare the way for the military coup of 1971. It also seems quite clear that the United States and the CIA ... assisted in the coup of that year. According to former US diplomat Robert Fresco, (the) government had simply become incapable of containing the growing anti-US radicalism in Turkey ... There are indications that the US, and particularly the CIA, exercised influence in the right-wing political sectors that included the Grey Wolves"<sup>119</sup> in order to effect the necessary governmental changes and subsequent psychological warfare 'anti-radical', 'anti-Kurdish' targeting actions. Berberoglu has additionally drawn attention to "Turkish press reported 'rumours' of a meeting on March 11th between the (1971 coup) commanders, (US) Ambassador Handley and Richard Helms, Director of the CIA, at the US Embassy in Ankara—thus implicating the CIA directly in the March 12th (coup) intervention."<sup>120</sup>

Similar US-NATO inspired psychological warfare tactics were again utilised to effect the 1980 coup. As Harris observes, "it is important to be clear that this analysis is not just a matter of speculation, or of 'the inevitable results of mob violence.' ... It remains the case that the tactics of those who helped to justify and organise a coup d'etat ... succeeded in Turkey ... It cannot be seriously denied that in the case of Turkey, it was perceived by NATO that western interests would best be served by the overthrow of democracy."<sup>121</sup> The US government's role in inspiring and covertly facilitating the coup has been charted by Savran, Tanor and Vassaf: "According to the ... journalist (Mehmet Ali Birand, the) US Secretary of State ... phoned (the US) President ... on the day of the coup to tell him: 'Your boys have done it. Those who were to intervene, have intervened.' One of the 'boys' was General Sahinkaya, Chief of the Air Force and one of the five members of the (junta's) National Security Council (NSC). He had a series of high-level meetings in Washington in the week preceding the military intervention."<sup>122</sup>

Saley Aay elaborates: The coup "was engineered not by fringe groups with fringe agendas but by the web of security agencies that had been woven by the CIA. Following the coup, the disappearances, murders, arrests and tortures" of Kurdish and other 'radical activists' "increased in volume and intensity. Henze's (CIA) coup—which was engineered by his good (NAP) friend Turkes—had a triple (inspired) goal:

- a) To combat the growing (Kurdish) unrest in Kurdistan,
- b) To combat rising Islamic fundamentalism,
- c) To counter Soviet expansionism which had set a beach head in Afghanistan."<sup>123</sup>

The effects of this 'inspired' psychological warfare policy were devastating: The "group of army generals (who) carried out (the) coup d'etat ... made it clear that they intended to brook no expression of the Kurdish movement or identity whatsoever."<sup>124</sup> In response to these and other positive assurances, the US Secretary of Defence, Weinberger, expressed his desire "to be of as much assistance as we can be" to the military junta.<sup>125</sup> "Endorsements of the coup" were also made by NATO's overall commander, US General Bernard

Rogers, who visited Ankara four times in early October, 1980, and General David Jones, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of staff, who visited Turkey in early November."<sup>126</sup> As US-NATO psychological warfare and other 'regular' military assistance continued, no fewer than eighty one thousand Kurds were detained between September 1980 and September 1982, and two thirds of the army's total force was mobilised in the Kurdish southeast to repress Kurdish society in the region.<sup>127</sup>

"Villages and homes were raided by the army, and tens of thousands of people, primarily Leftist activists and Kurds, were arrested and interrogated, frequently under torture."<sup>128</sup> At least 1,790 suspected members of the clandestine Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) were captured, including several members of its central committee,<sup>129</sup> and several "leading PKK members were killed in detention."<sup>130</sup> "In the case of the PKK itself, 122 death sentences were passed and some 150 were demanded."<sup>131</sup> Legislation, moreover, was passed which clearly sought to intensify the process of cultural genocide of Kurds.<sup>132</sup> In response to these targeting actions, Weinberger, US Secretary of Defence, noted with satisfaction that "the Turkish military government has fulfilled our *highest expectations* since assuming power. We particularly admire the way law and order has been restored (sic)."<sup>133</sup>

## Notes

1. Desmond Fernandes lectures in Human Geography and Tourism Studies at De Montfort University, Bedford, England. He has written extensively on issues relating to Turkish state terror, genocide, 'deep politics', tourism and the environment. He is the author of *Beyond the Paradise of Infinite Colours: Turkish State Terror, Tourism and the Kurdish Question* (London/Bangalore, KIC/R&B Books, 1996), *Tourism Boycotts of Turkey and Burma* (London, KIC, 1996), *The Kurdish Genocide in Turkey* (Reading, Taderon, forthcoming) and editor of Ismail Besikci's *International Colony* (Reading, Taderon, forthcoming). Iskender Ozden is a Kurdish analyst and has translated Musa Anter's *Hatiralarim* (*My Memoirs*) and Selahattin Celik's *Olum Makinasi: Turk Kontr-Gerillasi* (*Death Mission: The Turkish Contra-Guerrilla*) into English.
2. Chomsky, N. (1991) *Terrorising the Neighbourhood—American Foreign Policy in the Post Cold War Era*. Stirling, AK Press, p. 32.
3. Refer, for example, to Kinnane, D. (1964) *The Kurds and Kurdistan*. London/New York, The Institute of Race Relations/Oxford University Press, p. 33. For a wider debate on the 'targeting' activities of the 'colonial' and 'repressive' Turkish state, refer to Besikci, *International Colony*, and Anter, M. (1991) *Hatiralarim* (*My Memoirs—Volume One*). Istanbul, Yon Ayincilik.
4. As cited in Cook, D. (1989) *Forging the Alliance: NATO, 1945-1950*. London, Secker and Warburg, p. 74. See also Truman, H. (1947) 'The Truman Doctrine', in O'Tuathail, G., Dalby, S. and Routledge, P. (eds.) (1998) *The Geopolitics Reader*. London/New York, Routledge, p. 59.
5. Kolko, J. and Kolko, G. (1972) *The Limits of Power*. New York, Harper and Row, p. 413. Refer also to Herman, E. and Brodhead, F. (1986) *The Rise and Fall of the Bulgarian Connection*. New York, Sheridan Square Publications, p. 61.
6. Herman and Brodhead, *The Rise and Fall of the Bulgarian Connection*, p. 61.
7. Lord Kinross (1954) *Within the Taurus*. London, John Murray, p. 101.
8. Anter, M. (1991) *Hatiralarim* (*My Memoirs—Volume One*), p. 54. Translated into English by Iskender Ozden.
9. For further details on the nature of the Kurdish genocide, refer to Fernandes, D. (1998) 'The Kurdish Genocide in Turkey, 1924-98', *Armenian Forum*, Vol. 1 (4), p. 56-107.
10. Excerpts from a Turkish Ministry of Interior Affairs Report, dated 31st July, 1959, as quoted in Meiselas, S. (1997) *Kurdistan: In The Shadow of History*. New York, Random House, p. 228.
11. Kendal (1980) 'Kurdistan in Turkey', in Chaliand, G. (ed) *People Without A Country: The Kurds and Kurdistan*. London, Zed, p. 73. Kendal notes, for instance, that "a US officer headed its military committee," p. 73. Miles Copeland, a CIA officer and US Vice Consul in Syria in 1949, also notes in his book, *The Game Of Nations: The Amoral of Power Politics* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, p. 180), that "the Egyptians and everyone else knew very well that the (Baghdad) Pact"—later to evolve into the CENTO pact—"was (US) Secretary Dulles' brainchild."
12. Ghassemlou (1965) *Kurdistan and the Kurds*. London, Collet's, p. 251. See also Kendal, *Kurdistan in Turkey*, p. 73 and Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan and the Kurds*, p. 228, 251.
13. Randal, J. (1999) *After Such Knowledge, What Forgiveness?* Boulder, Westview, p. 269. Cihat Baban, a journalist for 'Ulus' newspaper, and an MP for the Peoples Republic Party (CHP) of Turkey, has also confirmed the anti-Kurdish basis of CENTO's strategy—See Anter, *Hatiralarim*, p. 193. Translated into English by Iskender Ozden.
14. Besikci, I. (forthcoming) *The International Colony* (English translation from the original). Reading, Taderon Press.
15. Besikci, I. (forthcoming) *The International Colony* (English translation from the original). Reading, Taderon Press.
16. Anter, *Hatiralarim*, p. 184. Translated into English by Iskender Ozden. Anter notes, however, that the Turkish state chose to "turn down this suggestion" as it would indirectly have the negative effect of promoting and legitimising the Kurdish language (p. 184)—a process which military and 'Kemalist' political circles found unacceptable.
17. Simpson, C. (1988) *Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazis and its Effects on the Cold War*. London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, p. 91.
18. Simpson, *Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazis and its Effects on the Cold War*, p. 94.
19. Celik, S. (1995) *Olum Makinasi: Turk Kontr-Gerillasi* (*Death Mission: The Turkish Contra-Guerrilla*). Cologne, Ulkem Press, p.67. Translated into English by Iskender Ozden.
20. Simpson, C. (1994) *The Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare*. Oxford, OUP, p. 39.
21. Simpson, *The Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare*, p. 39.
22. Adams, J. (1988) *Secret Armies: The Full Story of the SAS, Delta Force and Spetsnaz*. London, Pan, p. 28.
23. Paddock, A. (1982) *US Army Special Warfare*. Washington DC, National Defence University Press, p. 73, also as cited in Adams, *Secret Armies: The Full Story of the SAS, Delta Force and Spetsnaz*, p. 28-29.
24. Simpson, *The Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare*, p. 60.
25. Adams, *Secret Armies: The Full Story of the SAS, Delta Force and Spetsnaz*, p. 29.
26. According to Agee, "white propaganda is that which is openly acknowledged as coming from the US government, e.g. from the US Information Agency (USIA); grey propaganda is ostensibly attributed to people or organisations who do not acknowledge the US government as the source of their material and who produce the material as if it were their own; black propaganda is unattributed material, or it is attributed to a non-existent source, or it is false material attributed to a real source."—Agee, P. (1975) *Inside the Company: CIA Diary*. Harmondsworth, Penguin, p. 70.
27. As cited in Adams, *Secret Armies: The Full Story of the SAS, Delta Force and Spetsnaz*, p. 29-30.
28. Simpson, *The Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare*, p. 7, 8, 13, 116, 117.
29. For a detailed insight into the nature of the Kurdish genocide in Turkey, refer to Fernandes, D. (1999) 'The Kurdish Genocide in Turkey, 1924-98', *Armenian Forum*, Vol. 1(4), p. 56-107.
30. As quoted in Lewis Lapham's investigative documentary *American Power: Episode 4—Omnipotence*,

- screened on Discovery Channel, 1999.
31. As quoted in Lewis Lapham's investigative documentary *American Power: Episode 4—Omnipotence*, screened on Discovery Channel, 1999. For a further account of the use by the CIA of mercenary forces and criminal syndicates/masonic lodges (such as Aginter Press, World Service, Paladin Group, P-2, the Organisation Armee contre le Communisme International) throughout Europe, refer to Christie, S. (1984) *Stefano Delle Chaie: Portrait of a Black Terrorist*. London, Anarchy Magazine/Refract Publications.
  32. As cited in Simpson, *The Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare*, p. 12. Simpson interestingly notes that the army's definition of 'psychological warfare'—quoted here—"was classified as top secret at the time it was promulgated (early 1948) and remained officially secret until (as late as) the early 1980's," p. 12.
  33. See Simpson, *The Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare*, p. 12.
  34. Agee, P. (1975) *Inside the Company: CIA Diary*. Harmondsworth, Penguin, p. 61.
  35. Scott, P.D. (2000) 'Washington and the Politics of Drugs', *Variant*, 2 (11), p. 3.
  36. Adams, *Secret Armies: The Full Story of the SAS, Delta Force and Spetsnaz*, p. 30.
  37. See Celik's Turkey's *Killing Machine: The Contra Guerrilla Force* (<http://www.hatford-hwp.com/archives/51/017.htm>); Deger, E. (1978) *CIA, Kontr-Gerilla ve Turkiye*. Ankara, Calgar; Roth, J. and Taylan (1981) *Die Turkei: Republic unter Wolfen*. Bornheim, Lamuv; Genc, S. (1975) *Bicagin Sirtindali Turkiye: CIA/MIT/Kontr-Gerilla*. Istanbul, Savelli.
  38. As quoted in *Lobster—The Journal of Parapolitics*, Issue 18, 1989.
  39. See Kendal (1993) 'Kurdistan in Turkey', in Chaliand, G. (ed) *A People Without a Country: Kurds and Kurdistan*. London, Zed, p. 78.
  40. Mc Dowall, D. (1996) *A Modern History of the Kurds*. London, I.B. Tauris, p. 409.
  41. *Devrim*, no. 36 (23rd June, 1970), and quoted in Mc Dowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 409.
  42. Kendal, 'Kurdistan in Turkey', p. 78.
  43. Kendal, 'Kurdistan in Turkey', p. 78.
  44. Burghardt, T. (1998) 'Editor's Introduction', *Antifa Info-Bulletin*, Special Edition, May 12, 1998, p.1. For a detailed description of the drug linked terrorist activities of the Grey Wolves and NAP, refer to Celik, S. (ed.) (written in 1998) *Gangster State: The Susurluk Crash and the Entanglement of the State, Underworld and Counter-Guerrillas in Turkey* (The English Translation, as yet unpublished).
  45. Berberoglu, B. (1982) *Turkey in Crisis*. London, Zed, p. 119.
  46. Poulton, H. (1997) *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic*. London, Hurst and Company, p. 161.
  47. As quoted in Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic*, p. 153.
  48. Kendal, 'Kurdistan in Turkey', p. 96.
  49. Celik, *Olum Makinasi: Turk Kontr-Gerillasi*, p. 69 (As translated into English by Iskender Ozden).
  50. Celik, *Olum Makinasi: Turk Kontr-Gerillasi*, p. 69 (As translated into English by Iskender Ozden).
  51. *Counterspy*, Summer 1980, p. 14, as cited in the 'CIABASE files on Death Squads supported by the CIA' as compiled by Ralph McGehee, 10/11/95.
  52. *Counterspy*, Summer 1980, p.14, and as cited by Ralph McGehee, 'CIABASE files on Death Squads supported by the CIA', 10/11/95.
  53. Roubatis, Y. and Wynn, K. (1978) 'CIA Operations in Greece', in Agee, P. and Wolf, L. (eds) *Dirty Work: The CIA in Western Europe*. London, Zed, p. 149.
  54. As quoted in *Devrimci Sol* (1997) 'The Name of the War Against the People: Contra-Guerrillas,' *Devrimci Sol Revolutionary Left*, January 1997, p. 21.
  55. Celik, *Olum Makinasi: Turk Kontr-Gerillasi*, p. 168 (As translated into English by Iskender Ozden).
  56. Zurcher (1997) *Turkey: A Modern History*. London/New York, IB Tauris, p. 272.
  57. As quoted by Earley, P. (1997) *Confessions of a Spy: The Real Story of Aldrich Ames*. London, Hodder and Stoughton, p. 47.
  58. Anter notes, for instance, that "the leader of MIT, General Ziya Selisik, sent a letter ... in 1962 ... to *Yon* ('The Way') magazine to be published as a way of warning to 'left-wing groups' to rethink. He pointed out that all Kurds who were studying were viewed by the state as communists!" —See Anter, *Hatiralarim*, p. 217 (As translated into English by Iskender Ozden).
  59. It should be noted here, however, that doubts have been expressed in some quarters concerning the accuracy of Elci's claims. For a detailed discussion of this affair, refer to Anter, *Hatiralarim*, p. 210-216 (As translated into English by Iskender Ozden).
  60. As cited in Fernandes, D. (1996) *Beyond the Paradise of Infinite Colours: Turkish State Terror, Tourism and the Kurdish Question*. London, KIC, p. 69.
  61. Who was CIA director between 1953 and 1961.
  62. Simpson, C. (1993) *The Splendid Blond Beast:*

- Money, Law and Genocide in the Twentieth Century*. New York, Grove Press.
63. Loftus, J. and Aarons, M. (1997) *The Secret War Against the Jews: How Western Espionage Betrayed the Jewish People*. New York, St. Martin's Press/Griffin edition, p. 221.
64. Cook, *Forging the Alliance: NATO, 1945-1950*, p. 131.
65. Walker, W. (1982) *The Next Domino?* London, Corgi, p. 143, 146.
66. Pallister, D. (1990) *The Guardian*, 5th December, and as cited in Statewatch's (undated) 'Operation Gladio' file, p. 11.
67. As revealed to Former Prime Minister Ecevit and as cited in the February 1993 edition of *Info Turk* and Fernandes, *Beyond the Paradise of Infinite Colours: Turkish State Terror, Tourism and the Kurdish Question*, p. 69. Refer also to Celik's *Turkey's Killing Machine: The Contra-Guerrilla Force* (<http://www.hatford-hwp.com/archives/51/017.htm>); Roth, J. and Taylan, K. (1981); *Counterspy* Vol. VI, No 2, February-April 1982, p. 23-25 and Herman and Brodhead's *The Rise and Fall of the Bulgarian Connection*, p. 61.
68. Roth, J. and Taylan, K. (1981) *Die Turkei: Republik Unter Wolfen/Turkey: A Republic Ruled By Wolves*. Bornheim, Lamur Verlag, as quoted in Herman, *The Rise and Fall of the Bulgarian Connection*, p. 61.
69. *Hurriyet*, 26 November 1992, and as cited in Celik, *Turkey's Killing Machine: The Contra-Guerrilla Force* (<http://www.hatford-hwp.com/archives/51/017.htm>).
70. In effect a parallel structure to the CIA-NATO inspired 'Gladio' paramilitary organisation in Italy, 'Schwert' ('Sword') in Austria, 'SDR-8' in Belgium, 'Glaive' in France, 'Operation Sheepskin' in Greece, 'Sveaborg' in Sweden, 'P-26' in Switzerland and others in Denmark, Germany, Holland, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Spain and the UK.
71. Celik, *Turkey's Killing Machine: The Contra-Guerrilla Force* (<http://www.hatford-hwp.com/archives/51/017.htm>).
72. *Associated Press* release, 14 November, 1990 and as cited in Statewatch's (undated) *Operation Gladio* file.
73. See Lee, M.A. (1997) 'On the Trail of Turkey's Terrorist Grey Wolves', *Antifa Info-Bulletin*, 10 July, 1997 (<http://burn.ucsd.edu/archives/kurd-1/1997/0006.html>).
74. Directive ST 31-15—'Action Against Irregular Forces'—See Celik, *Olum Makinasi: Turk Kontr-Gerillasi*, p. 77 (As translated into English by Iskender Ozden).
75. See Celik, *Olum Makinasi: Turk Kontr-Gerillasi*, p. 77 (As translated into English by Iskender Ozden).
76. See Celik, *Turkey's Killing Machine: The Contra-Guerrilla Force* (<http://www.hatford-hwp.com/archives/51/017.htm>).
77. See Celik, *Turkey's Killing Machine: The Contra-Guerrilla Force* (<http://www.hatford-hwp.com/archives/51/017.htm>).
78. As cited in Fernandes, *Beyond the Paradise of Infinite Colours: Turkish State Terror, Tourism and the Kurdish Question*, p. 69.
79. Flint, J. (1997) *Correspondent: In the Interests of the State*. London, BBC 2.
80. See Celik, *Olum Makinasi: Turk Kontr-Gerillasi*, p. 76 (As translated into English by Iskender Ozden).
81. *Directive ST 31/15 for Operations Against Irregular Forces*, as cited in Celik, *Turkey's Killing Machine: The Contra-Guerrilla Force* (<http://www.hatford-hwp.com/archives/51/017.htm>).
82. Franco Salinas, 'State of Emergency' (p82-88), as cited in Celik, *Turkey's Killing Machine: The Contra-Guerrilla Force* (<http://www.hatford-hwp.com/archives/51/017.htm>).
83. Celik, *Turkey's Killing Machine: The Contra-Guerrilla Force* (<http://www.hatford-hwp.com/archives/51/017.htm>).
84. Kurku, E. (1997) 'Turkey: Trapped in a Web of Covert Killers', *Antifa Info-Bulletin*, 7 August 1997.
85. As cited/quoted in Fernandes, *Beyond the Paradise of Infinite Colours: Turkish State Terror, Tourism and the Kurdish Question*, p. 69.
86. As cited/quoted in Fernandes, *Beyond the Paradise of Infinite Colours: Turkish State Terror, Tourism and the Kurdish Question*, p. 69.
87. As cited/quoted in Fernandes, *Beyond the Paradise of Infinite Colours: Turkish State Terror, Tourism and the Kurdish Question*, p. 69.
88. Devrimci Sol (1997) 'Who Are Guilty?', *Devrimci Sol*, January 1997, p. 31.
89. Human Rights Watch Arms Project (1995) *Weapons Transfers and Violations of the Laws of War in Turkey*. New York, Human Rights Watch, p. 4.
90. See Fernandes, D. (1999) 'The Kurdish Genocide in Turkey, 1924-98', *Armenian Forum*, Vol. 1 (4).
91. Human Rights Watch Arms Project, *Weapons Transfers and Violations of the Laws of War in Turkey*, p. 17.
92. See Fernandes, *Beyond the Paradise of Infinite Colours: Turkish State Terror, Tourism and the Kurdish Question*, p. 69.
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97. See Celik, *Olum Makinasi: Turk Kontr-Gerillasi*, p. 87-88 (As translated into English by Iskender Ozden).
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110. *Covert Action* (No. 61), as quoted by Clark, W (1999) 'Byzantine Politics: The Abduction and Trial of Abdullah Ocalan', p. 3.
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# Identity and Interpretation in Literary Practice

Jim Ferguson

People involved in the practice of literary art are often asked about their sense of identity, their sense of place; do others interpret their work correctly? what is it about their background etc? what makes them want to be writers?

These questions are sometimes shot-through with marketing spin. Nevertheless, there is no denying that they are important. Whether the answers to the questions are of any use is debatable, but the process of trying to answer, of thinking about them, is certainly useful. What follows is a collage concerning these issues.

**From Robert Burns to W. S. Graham:  
Beyonds, Roundabouts & Backwards**

Whilst making some biographical notes on the Paisley poet Robert Tannahill (1774-1810) around 1995 I put the following in brackets—

It is time to forget about the unhelpful categorising of some writers as local, minor talents and others as wonderful magicians of universal truth.

This was around the time Tom Leonard's *Reports from the Present* was published by Jonathan Cape. Leonard, in a superb series of 3 essays titled "Art as Encounter"<sup>2</sup>, tackles issues relevant to the above head on.

There is an e.e. cummings poem which says—  
since feeling is first  
who pays attention  
to the syntax of things  
will never wholly kiss you



What this meant to cummings himself I have no idea, nor can I remember which poem it comes from or in which book it appears. But to me it is saying something akin to the arguments put by Leonard. That is, of course, if one first of all dispenses with a literalist interpretation based on classical Cartesian duality. There is a political dimension to these lines, just as there is in Leonard's essays: so, let me say something political:

Control of political institutions means control over language.

Control over language means control of political institutions.

In light of this, W. S. Graham's question "What is the language using us for?" takes on an extra dimension, additional to being an exploration of the possibilities of communication.

I say this silence or, better, construct this space  
So that somehow something may move across  
The caught habits of language to you and me.  
From where we are it is not us we see  
And times are hastening yet, disguise is mortal.  
The times continually disclose our home.

Here in the present tense disguise is mortal.  
The trying times are hastening. Yet here I am  
More truly now this abstract act become.

from *The Constructed Space*, W.S. Graham

*But at a deeper level it was one of Shakespeare's great statements about art, that he knows he's doing this for you, he knows that you know it, and what he's saying is that Art is so precious because only in it can an object come to have human life in your presence.*<sup>3</sup>

Robert Burns (1759-96), magnificent writer that he was, has become a national icon more tarnished than the most garish, phoney tartan. The marketing of Burns has everything to do with tourism and nothing to do with literature. Burns is the quintessential symbol of the commodification

of a writer. The same *thing* has been inflicted on Shakespeare by the English/British State/Establishment. Only a fool, or someone who whole-heartedly supports the underlying assumptions of free-market capitalism, would not lament this state of affairs. To put it in those free-market terms, every *thing* must have a realisable market value, from a person to an art work to space exploration, there has to be some means of extracting a profit. But before this can happen the thing must be objectified, made part of that value system or canon and stripped of its inherent value as a *thing* in itself. Autonomy must be suppressed.

This is the assumption which underlies how the global market is run and it is underpinned by the principle embodied in the previous statement that:

*Control of political institutions means control over language.*

*Control over language means control of political institutions.*

It is for this reason that the "local" is so important. It implies a sense of place and experience of life that can be, to some extent, controlled and apprehended on an ordinary human scale. This can help folk find their own sense of identity and give them the confidence to move further into the world beyond their locale, assured of the intrinsic value they have as human beings. As folk who can act to make the world the better (or worse) the way they want to.

In a certain sense, all the particular localities are different and the same simultaneously. Flannery O'Connor, Robert Burns, Robert Tannahill, all of us really, are most honest about ourselves (or most ourselves?) when engaged closely with our immediate social surroundings.

In light of the note in bold at the start of this section, the Edinburgh-based writer Dilys Rose suggested I look at the work of the American writer Eudora Welty. This is what Welty said about the use of the local as a limiting term to pigeon-hole writers:

"Regional" I think, is a careless term, as well as a condescending one, because what it does is fail to differentiate between the localized raw material of life and its outcome as art. "Regional" is an outsider's term; it has no meaning for the insider who is doing the writing, because as far as he knows he is simply writing about life.

**What is the matter with Franz Kafka?**

*I wonder if there is anything the matter? precisely that is what is the matter. If there is nothing the matter I wonder why, yet if there is something genuinely making me ill I am puzzled as to what to do. Always what ails me is my mind. I am mentally ill, the illness in my lungs is merely a manifestation of that affliction.*

*It is immaterial that I am ill.*

*The gulf between those two worlds; the world of the dreaming mind where my imagination might release me from the physically dishevelled actual world, is sometimes preferable. To occupy the gulf itself is a pleasure; though this pleasure does not last as it impossible to remain a long time at that place. The place I have titled the gulf. Only there am I released from the purgatory of the physical.*



*How am I to know this for sure?  
There was, I assure you, a time when I wished that Louise would kill me. The strength of this feeling was not, however, always constant. Sometimes it vanished completely. Then I was forced to consider the reliability of my own thought processes. This, I imagine, is what mortals, live human beings all suffer from; and it is easy to understand how such is related to the general propensity of people to exercise free will. The indulgence of which may be seen as a certain source of satisfaction. Imbuing one with a*

*feeling of wellbeing.*

*Again, as I sat musing on some problem, the case of another, another afflicted with lung disease and wishing to claim, quite correctly, their entitlement from my employers, The Insurance Institute, I wondered what was the matter with me.*

*I have never been afraid of asbestos.*

*I have failed myself and others in various different ways which in reality amount to nothing but a dark street, empty and lifeless. Of course I have spent time studying the law, took a slight interest in the Gaelic language. It has surrounded me. I know it in a certain sense though it is not mine. Language is not really to be possessed at all. I think not. Again and again I wondered what was wrong with me. What was the matter? Possibly cancer. Maybe weakness. General weakness of the spirit. Magnified debility. The inability to overcome.*

*Yet not so. Such was not in my public demeanour. Not in any obvious way. Yet if what is the matter is that there is nothing the matter then evidently there is something the matter. A sentence can take on its momentum. Go in a direction one is not at all sure of. Not all writing is deliberate. Nor is every word put down with conscious intent. The fact is that a very many people know this and yet do not appear to be aware of it at the same time; if such is the case then fact it is not.*

*What is the fact of a thought?*

*Where did the small group of students go? They too studied law. Were vaguely acquainted with myself. If the night was wet it might be that they simply had gone indoors. Entered into a...*

*It cannot be possible to mistrust so greatly, that both the mental and physical realities of life are cast into doubt. Yet all language is unreliable; English, Gaelic, French, Czech, German, Yiddish, Hopi. All of it. Or perhaps none. And how to translate between all and none, or from one person to another, without a loss somehow of clarity.*

*Is it true about my thought processes?*

The fact that Kafka did not come from Germany but an émigré community in Prague possibly contributed to the originality of his voice<sup>4</sup>. He was in a marginal community, and marginalised still more within that community because he was Jewish. Prague German was not an identical language to the standard German of the time.

**Place, Peers & Tradition**

Where does one place oneself? I don't know: in a certain sense, that of geographical location, being in a country or a city is irrelevant but at the same time it is one of the most important facts in the formation of what is called identity, person-hood or sense of self. This contradiction<sup>5</sup> arises for the following reasons—  
While I love Glasgow and



Who the fuck cares? Mad and obscure auld bastard that I am. Wondering where asides fall in and out. What does that mean? What does that?



Scotland I am always disappointed with where I live and happen to have been born. Whether this is a personal failing I do not know but it is associated with feeling a lack of freedom. There is an awful lot of cramping of creativity, for all sorts of reasons, but mostly I think to do with social class, religion and negative attitudes towards others connected with sexism and race snobbery. This is mixed with other judgmental attitudes and stereotyping; poets are gay, writers are mad or eccentric, if you're not making much money why do you do it? Just a complete lack of understanding of what it is to be a literary artist. (Or any other practising artist).

I used to think I was a poet, now I only think that occasionally; where tradition might offer comfort and a sense of fitting in for some people, I have never really felt this greatly. The only thing I know is that I love the sounds of peoples' voices. If there is any kind of "tradition" I feel an affinity for it is the idea of using language in a way that recognises words as sounds, as noises. Even from the page I want to feel the breath of a writer. Their cadences, the song of themselves, to paraphrase Whitman. My peers are interesting, as writers, only in so far as I can feel the breath and honesty of their writing. Of course as human beings they are more important than that. Almost everyone is. A person is much more than the sum-total of their work.

I wish we had more fun in this culture. But then, even the Gloomy Winter<sup>6</sup> has its good points. You always have to be optimistic. Even if it's a bleak kind of optimism. That is what I am for, bleak optimism: I think, maybe, Camus was involved with something like that.

#### Descartes and all that

It is difficult to think about questions of identity without the old dichotomy of the inner and outer life popping up. The psychological and the physical, *the inside the head and the out there*. But maybe that's all just bullshit. Maybe there is no dichotomy at all and everything just is. Outer/inner/ thinking/ other peoples' thinking/ the external physical world, maybe it's all just the one thing, just life: being alive and experiencing what it is to be alive and the argument, so well described by Descartes is just a fine detail, a kind of trivial spectroscopy which in the absolute sense doesn't matter a fuck.

However, even if one were to accept the "wholeness" of it all, it gets us no further forward in the argument as to what it means to have sense of identity, except perhaps that one is less fragmented than folk who have fallen for Descartes.

It seems to me that at a fundamental level identity is accidental, but this quasi-objective viewpoint also has its difficulties: because as individual human beings *who we are*, is so very important. And if we think we know who we are then another kind of dualism comes in. This is the idea of those who are not ourselves being *other*, those who come from a different place, have different ideas and practices, eat different food, use a different linguistic code. Then one should ask the question—What does that matter? Essentially, the problem of difference is the fundamental problem of identity. To have an identity there must be some *other*; there must be a different identity which one can compare one's own against. The real question then is whether this awareness of otherness makes you fearful or curious. If folk become fearful then we have the war situation, the defence response, which is very natural in the animal world. Nevertheless it always appeals to me, as an individual to be curious, to want to know and understand what other people are about. All this is probably self evident, sometimes the obvious is easy, like Newtonian mechanics before Einstein, but it is also easy to overlook.

Who knows? the world is the place where we live, the best I can do is try to make it as good as I

can. Always this will fail; but in the trying maybe folk become better. Maybe they don't become irrational murderers. This is an interminable question, there is no end of it until there is an end to human beings, or we evolve to a state of being which would be unrecognisable to anyone alive at present.

Of course, there are those who believe that all folk need to have to have a sense of identity is a religion. Even such a singular view is fraught with problems: which religion? what for? why? does religious faith make people feel any better?

#### Predestination, Fate, Coincidence and Distance: Flannery O'Connor's *A Good Man is Hard to Find*

This story is essentially about a particular kind of morality and world view. The view is Christian. Yet the characters can never live up to the ideals of Christianity and so must suffer. The idea of predestination; that everything is determined by God for eternity and that human's must suffer or love this state of affairs features strongly.

There is a sense of narrative distance—the narrator as God—the voice of the narrator being very detached from the story and the characters; the matter of fact style of narration, one might say bears some relation to a Presbyterian theological outlook. There is also the possibility of a non-Christian fatalism; that the fate of the characters cannot be avoided, whether or not there is a God. It's just that the people in this story, especially the grandmother, happen to believe that there is. For the grandmother God might offer her a kind of redemption in this life by letting her live. But he does not. God is not always merciful. As *The Misfit* said. "It's no real pleasure in life." But then *The Misfit* is clearly not a good man. He is a serial killer with a Messianic complex.

This is the story of the brutal murder of six members of the one family; the grandmother, the mother and father and three children. The fact that they appear to end up dead through the actions of the grandmother and her cat may or not be significant. There may be some kind of symbolism involving the cat and the grandmother. If the grandmother had never taken the cat in the car then they would all still be alive. If the grandmother had had her own way in the first place they would have gone elsewhere and still be alive. However, the story unfolds with a relentless logic of its own, a kind of predetermined logic whereby the only thing that can happen is that this family end up dead.

No doubt there are many possible interpretations of this story and its meaning etc. but I agree with Susan Sontag that—

By reducing a work of art to its contents and then interpreting *that*, one tames the work of art. Interpretation makes art manageable, comfortable.<sup>8</sup>

However, there is a different kind of interpretation,—perhaps many—whereby one is moved into something of greater consequence and significance than the mere content of the work. It is *that leap* into the almost intangible space where art has a particular impact on individuals and changes them. Where a work moves one to a new place, a different place to that which existed before the encounter.

Another possible interpretation of *A Good Man is Hard to Find* would be that of the corrupting influence of the "American dream." Something that has come to have significance for millions of people owing to the Hollywood effect or US cultural imperialism. O'Connor demonstrates how this materialist striving affects behaviour and warps relationships.

From the offset the grandmother is defeated by the attitude of her son Bailey and his silent wife. It is also significant that the only one she cries for is her own son "Bailey Boy." Maybe this has no significance whatever!!

It certainly is relevant to compare the work of

Ms O'Connor to that of Arthur Miller. This is such a frustrating tale of the chase, just like the chase of Willy Loman. Who could have a daughter called June Star and a son named Biff in their separate works, and not share the same angst?

The magnetic draw of the "American dream" is so romantically approached by the grandmother, when at first she recalls the tale of the lover who arrives every Saturday with the simple gift of a watermelon. Immediately, this is disregarded by the obnoxious children as their grandmother's nostalgic love, yet harks back to a more innocent age. Eventually, the grandmother's naivete (goodness) is uncovered as a mere pretence for her own lack of faith. The choice of destination is sad for the grandmother due to the fond memories she has of Tennessee and Georgia, which she would like the spoiled children to have the chance to experience. Instead, they head off as a family for the promised land of Florida which they have visited before!

En route, she remembers a house, just a few miles from the road they are driving down, she visited as a young woman. In order to persuade the family to indulge in her nostalgia and do the necessary detour she tells the children of a hidden panel where the family who lived there hid all their silver. Immediately the children insist on visiting the house. Driving down the dirt track towards the house the grandmother remembers that they aren't on the right road at all; this journey has taken a wrong turn.

It's completely wild that from this point until the end of the story, which is only a few more pages each member of the family is murdered. It is here that Ms O'Connor reveals the fatalism of the journey; which is symbolic of the dichotomy between materialism and the kind of Christian Fundamentalism found in the American south.

*No one is innocent.*

#### Notes

1. W. S. (Sydney) Graham was born in Greenock in 1918. He died in 1986. Much of his adult life was spent at St. Ives in Cornwall. The best edition I have found of his work is *Collected Poems 1942-1977*, Faber, London, 1979. See also: *Edinburgh Review* #75, Polygon, 1987. *The Constructed Space—A Celebration of W. S. Graham*, Jackson's Arm, Lincoln, 1994.
2. Tom Leonard, *Reports from the Present*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1995, pp.19-62.
3. Ibid, p.29.
4. In this context there is the ever present problem of translation from one language to another, but I think this problem can be solved to some extent by reading different translators. Though it is always better if one can read an author in the original language.
5. There is also the contradiction between genetic inheritance and learned behaviour. Perhaps, in essence, another form of the argument about free will and predestination.
6. See Robert Tannahill, *Poems and Songs*, Ed. Semple, Gardner, Paisley, 1876, p.198.
7. Flannery O'Connor, *A Good Man is Hard to Find*, Women's Press Edition, London, 1980.
8. Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation*.



Images of Franz Kafka's life and death, including some marginal manuscript scribbles.

# Metaphysical pathos

## William Clark

### Care, Diligence and Skill

A handbook for the governing bodies of arts organisations

*The Scottish Arts Council* £5.00

Imagine a book which finally explains how to organise things in the arts, and that this has been compiled over a period of twenty years by the people at the very top of the Arts Council, with the assistance of legal and financial experts. Well its been around for some time: the fifth edition of *Care, Diligence and Skill* (CD&S) is to be re-printed and updated some time this year; although it is a surprise it was funded, given the present criteria. It is aimed at a tiny audience, which by its own reckoning meet for only 18 hours each year. Although almost completely useless, the publication's history, the people behind it, how and why it came about—its underlying assumptions—reveals a very negative approach.

The 1986 version attacked 'non-incorporated organisations' inciting that these vital and diverse forms be discouraged, disenfranchised and branded as inherently useless:

"In short, the unincorporated association is not appropriate for any organisation proposing to undertake ventures of any significance, to handle large sums of money, to own or lease property or to assume legal commitments."

This has been retained in all four editions and is one of the few points the book makes. No explanation or evidence is offered for the hypothesis. I would assume it is because individuals cannot escape being held responsible for the consequences of their own actions.

Any serious revision should re-evaluate this generalisation in the light of the enduring success of artist-run projects (mostly unincorporated associations) and the spectacular collapse (and expensive bailing out and quasi-legal swindling of creditors) of numerous thoroughly incorporated associations throughout the UK during the '80s and '90s.

In the arts things have to start somewhere, and they tend to start small. This book imagines that artwork comes from nowhere. To offer a self-fulfilling prophecy where *all* artist-run projects are deemed improper purely through their existence is poor leadership. Historically this dogma inhibited or prevented the funding of artist-run projects at a crucial point in their development. Suspensions of ignorance or worse are aroused when what is presented as a positive guide for arts organisations, seems better described as a negative document proscribing what is allowed. In this review I will show that its root aims are to limit and exclude and that they are ideologically flawed.

### Bored of Directors

So who should be running arts organisations? The answer given in CD&S is an illogical, tortuous, encroachment of dogma:

"*First and foremost* a board needs one or more members with professional knowledge of the relevant art form. *Of equal importance* is having a person with a knowledge of finance, banking, accounts and law. A business executive...may be valuable." [emphasis added]

They may also run off with the money. But not all people with business acumen are untrustworthy. Similarly, the SAC failed to realise that not all unincorporated organisation are "not appropriate," simply because they are unyielding to appropriation because they do not believe that promises of commercial exploitation will lead to the Big Rock Candy Mountain. Artists have the right *not* to act as a wholesale propriety for certain stan-

dards of conformity and ownership as dictated by finance, banking and business executives. No one holds these kinds of jobs up as paragons of virtue anymore anyway. The many ways artists have organised themselves (at no great expense to the tax payer) is written out of this handbook because they haven't got a clue about what actually took place.

CD&S' advice on professionalism is amateurish. It comes from a period when arts funding (by that I mean actually funding art) was unbalanced and conditioned by obsessive propaganda that the social value of art should be welded to crackpot versions of the 'values of the marketplace'. A very politicised period which pretended not to be.

The proud chairman of the SAC when CD&S first emerged was the economist Sir Alan Peacock, at the time a trustee of the Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA); eventually joining its advisory council in '91, when questions were asked in the House of Commons concerning its status and activities. These aimed to establish that it was covertly a political organisation, and thus unworthy of its charitable status. An allegation often levelled at small misunderstood organisations.

The economics or 'standards' propounded by the IEA, which were openly taken up by the Tory government in '82, were, amongst others:

"...more denationalisation of industry; an extension of private medicine; the introduction of education vouchers...; and more anti-union legislation."<sup>1</sup>

The formal political manifestation of the "nominally independent" IEA was the Margaret Thatcher and Keith Joseph led, Centre for Policy Studies (CPS):

"Both were in the propaganda business. Both have offices in relatively unassuming private houses in SW1."<sup>2</sup>

The CPS concentrated on the Universities, the IEA on Fleet Street and the City, Sir Alan was appointed by the government, to concentrate on the SAC.

Founded in the '50s by Lord Ralph Harris, the IEA was the first organisation in the UK to publish Milton Friedman's monetarist economics. It gets weirder. Investigative journalists say it later took an active part in the cabals which covertly drove the Conservative party rightwards in the 70s. Arthur Seldon, deputy for Lord Harris, wrote a book with the notorious MI6 operative, Brian Crozier. Lord Harris himself shared a platform with Crozier and John Gouret of the Freedom Association (founded by the far-right McWhirter twins) addressing the officers of the Army Staff College at Camberly circa '75. This was an effort to encourage direct military intervention against "internal subversion" i.e. the left.<sup>3</sup> Those were the days.

The IEA are more well known for their work in the field of privatisation. It was they who commissioned Stephen Littlechild in '81 to write the paper "Ten steps to denationalisation," Littlechild later became one of the four "regulators" who oversaw 20% of the UK's GDP in the form of the four utilities Gas, Water, Electricity and Telecommunications. The IEA also influenced the Tory Government's minimum wage policy,<sup>4</sup> promoted the racist notion that "non-traditional" families (i.e. black and Asian) produce more delinquent children<sup>5</sup> and advocated that "student loans should be charged at a higher rate of interest."<sup>6</sup> Mrs Thatcher herself stated that

"What we have achieved could never have been done without the leadership of the IEA."<sup>7</sup>

An IEA type influence on the SAC can be discerned in CD&S, in the form of this politically

biased managerialism. 'Administration' is a vehicle of political persuasion because it produces an illusion of impartiality while striking at the heart at how the arts are (and can be) funded and organised. Arts policy of the period tried to develop forms of privatisation. The Arts Council was perceived as a body, stemming from the post-war creation of the "welfare state," which came under such assault (through privatisation) by the Tory party; itself guided by the IEA.

These drives encouraged the assumption that business is somehow apolitical. For instance: if we adopt the outline given in CD&S, it follows that an exhibition sponsored by Shell and ran by an organisation which contains executives from Shell, is the best suited to promote the work of radical Nigerian writers whose work deals with the activities of Shell in Nigeria.<sup>8</sup> One can view the tendencies inherent in independent or indigenous or artist-run projects as running counter to these notions because they lack faith in what provisions they make for cultural freedom.

### Going down under

CD&S says itself that it was based on an Australian book written by Timothy Pascoe in 1979. His time with the Australian Arts Council is viewed as a reactionary response to media attacks on spending on the arts, which began as a minor part of the campaign which saw the Whitlam Labor Government peremptorily dismissed in '75. In politics a soft targets get easy answers. The new government with its (highly publicised attitude of) 'financial accountability' towards the arts, came at a time of newspaper headlines inveighing against 'subsidised scribblers' similar to the orchestrated outcry over the Tate's 'piles of bricks' in the UK. When the 1983 Labor Government re-took office (under Bob Hawke) it did not replicate Whitlam's largesse; keeping to the reactionary 'financial accountability' position on the arts, suspiciously similar to the arts paranoia being run now by the UK Labour party. The Australian experience is a useful mirror of our own because it ran ahead during the ugly craziness of UK Conservative control.

"By now the business men and women were moving in and meeting government on its own terms. The Australian Ballet went on strike over relations with management. In 1982 Timothy Pascoe, arts business adviser and former director of the Liberal Party, became executive chairman and set about 'restructuring' the Council."<sup>9</sup>

In 1983, Pascoe's "Excellence Isn't Always", pre-tentiously outlined the 'negative effects' of the past government's arts doctrine, as a preamble to justify cuts and the positive effects of adherence to the new doctrine (potential funding!). Tim Rowse, a writer on Australian arts, in his 1996 'Arguing the Arts' puts forward Pascoe's case:

"He proposed that the Council formulate a clearer definition of excellence, that it include innovation more prominently in its criteria of the excellent and that it 'limit the number and value of subsidies and programs relating to excellence.'"<sup>10</sup>

The function of Pascoe's writing was not as a statement of Council policy. It was to insinuate a new persistent rhetoric *to limit and exclude* what arts organisations could do if they expected their bread to be buttered. Some social Darwinism had just popped into existence. According to Rowse:

"Into its uses are packed a number of deeply felt assumptions about the relationship between Art and power. 'Excellence' reverberates with that bourgeois utopianism in which money and political power are politely separated from and subordinated to the higher



Magnus Linklater, Paul Pia, Seona Reid: a modern version of Rembrandt's *The Syndics*.

things of life, such as Art. Excellence makes another implicit and equally utopian appeal to its users; it implies the user has an authority to make distinctions of quality and intelligence and to have those distinctions accepted as authoritative throughout the nation. It implies a kind of sovereignty of good taste. Excellence is a language of the powerful, which effaces the social basis of that power.”<sup>11</sup>

Katharine Brisbane’s “The Arts and the Pre-emptive Buckle” provides further inside assessment of Pascoe’s worth. An original member of the Australia Council, writing in 1999, she speaks critically about the Faustian bargain whereby the larger organisations had become the captives of their sponsors and subscribers, more ‘mono-cultural’ and regressive than they were in the ‘50s and ‘60s.

She identifies Pascoe’s pursuit of bureaucratically contrived forms of ‘excellence’ *in others*, as a root problem. The authors of CD&S viewed his work uncritically as the basis for a solution. Brisbane categories the practical out-working of Pascoe’s policies as a period where the growth and career of the artist was left out of the equation, with their working conditions suggesting that they were seen as no more than “pabulum for production values”. She criticises those who have acquiesced to the climate of dependence, bounded by guidelines which conspire against individual artists entering public controversy; or revealing the reality of their lives. Guidelines which set at a premium the young, the new and the correct while discounting everyone else in the name of ‘inclusion.’

“The ABC’s John Cleary has coined a phrase to describe this condition. He calls it the Pre-emptive Buckle. The occasion was a discussion with Rev. Tim Costello about the rise of gambling addiction in Victoria and his perception that the charities now dealing with the problem had earlier failed to oppose government-supported gambling for fear of losing their subsidies. It was, said Cleary, a pre-emptive buckle. I believe that 30 years of subsidy has brought about a similar genuflexion in the arts’ way of thinking: I think it is time for a moratorium.”<sup>12</sup>

As with the UK, the Australian Arts Council was devised by bankers. Dr. Coombs, who retired as Chairman of the Reserve Bank to form the Australia Council, was one of the iconic figures in the history of fiscal policy not unlike Keynes. According to Brisbane—who was appointed by Coombs—as Pascoe and the Australia Council moved in line with the arts policy of the Federal Government:

“The changes lost sight of community, of the reasons we once believed making the arts was important: that the pursuit of excellence, by its nature, has divided the arts from everyday life...In pursuit of ‘professionalism’ healthy amateur culture was discarded. Subsidy to new competitors drove the commercial theatre to bankruptcy. Early support for research and development sought from universities was eroded by ill-run residencies and mutual distrust. The politics of subsidy inevitably ensured that the product became the measure of progress, not the arduous process of artistic development. No national cultural policy was drawn up which took account of all the aspects of cultural life. No industrial infrastructure was built to support the artist from youth to age.”<sup>13</sup>

Does this sound familiar? The Australia Council’s major problem related to Pascoe being accountable to government, who will dogmatically want short-term visible results and be recalcitrant towards long-term ‘invisible’ investment. Brisbane is an ex-colleague of Pascoe’s summing up his performance as chief executive. According to CD&S “the chief executive...is the key person in determining the success or failure of an organisation.”

## Pia Pressure

In Scotland, back in ‘86, the then chairman of the SAC, little Timothy Mason (who had worked for the Australian Arts Council from 77 to 80) and his acquaintance Paul Pia, who worked next door to the SAC’s Charlotte Square offices, took Pascoe’s other work “Strengthening the Covenant’s of arts organisations” and used it as the basis for CD&S.<sup>14</sup>

Paul Pia puts pay to the Biblical warning that ‘no man can have many masters’. His interest in the SAC stems from his use of ‘culture’ as a veil in his ‘activities’ as a middle-man for multi-nationals. As a member of Scottish Council for Development and Industry and Scottish Financial Enterprise he is in an envious position to advise development agencies as to which multi-national should get the cash and also while chairman of the Japan Society of Scotland and director of the Scottish North American Business Council advise the “multi-national companies on international trade and inward and outward investments.” Ideally the multi-national comes in, gets a grant from nice development agencies and the profits go outward under the name of urban renewal or the latest political slogan, then the multi-national goes away. During the process, while they are waiting they may brush against some art.

According to his blurb what Pia does is set up “appropriate corporate structures for international business; international tax and transfer pricing; international contracts; international protection of industrial property rights and issues of risk management.”<sup>15</sup>

He is also a member of the Scottish Oil Club (Scotland being the only country to discover oil and get poorer), a legal firm W & J Burness and a fellow of the Institute of Directors. Through acting for large numbers of businesses from North America, continental Europe, the Far East and the Pacific Rim, Pia is used to dealing with companies from different business and legal cultures, and indeed quasi-illegal cultures: what is legal in one place may need more discretion in another.<sup>16</sup> You should see what RTZ get away with.

## Proven lawyers

Laurence Harbottle of the show-biz law firm Harbottle & Lewis (who handle Richard Branson) are cited for further legal advice and assistance with CD&S. Someone should contact him and enquire whether he wants to be a witness for the prosecution or the defence. In his article ‘Do We Want An Arts Council?’ published in ‘99, Harbottle puts the Arts council on trial, focusing first on the Lottery:

“The modern Arts world has also been seriously affected by the Lottery. It might have been a new dawn but proved otherwise. We have lived through three stages: the first employing a welter of consultancies saw the Lottery, having spent money lavishly on its own organisation and a plethora of business plans, giving profligate awards; the second saw the problem of matching funding absorbing private and charitable funds which should have been spent more productively; the third saw the Government robbing the bank in ill advised tribute to its own distant origins.”

Then he becomes a character witness for the kind of people the Arts Council em...get to advise it:

“The Arts Council itself always had difficulty in finding sufficient staff with sympathetic knowledge. Multiplying Regional Arts Boards across the country makes the task ten times more difficult. A new untrained Civil Service is the result and accordingly instead of reacting to artistic initiative both Council and Boards take refuge in formulae, using patterns to create pictures they can recognise and then providing a limited number of stock reactions to fit the patterns they have themselves created. Regional Boards which fail to accept any Court of Appeal or even the superiority of the Arts Council, cause structural rigidity. Inadequate provision,

uncertainty about continuity, lack of funding in adversity, capital funding without sustained support, untrained bureaucrats, self reproducing oligarchies, the distancing of experienced practitioners all provide a bitter inheritance.”<sup>17</sup>

This is not exactly a testimony for the defence. We should realise that in respect of CD&S many readers will feel that the advice must cut both ways. The Arts Council is a “governing body of arts organisations” itself: the target audience of CD&S. Is it actually able to take the advice of its legal advisor? The reality of the “bitter inheritance” identified by Harbottle is—yes, the situation whereby the same people (DEMOS being the worst and himself included) advise, administrate and run arts organisations for their own financial gain—but also it is the effect it has on the lives of those who choose to be artists. The criminal waste of lost opportunities. With his previous chairmanship of the ICA, Harbottle is as guilty as anyone here.

How can experience be brought to bear on an organisation which does not want to hear it? Harbottle’s ‘new structures’ will not emerge from feeble publications such as CD&S, which he endorses, but which deliberately exclude and ignore. The meagre legal advice given in CD&S states that you should ‘seek advice’. One also wonders why in the light of his criticisms the firm have let their company name endorse bathetic statements like this from page 21 of CD&S:

“Lobbying for public grants and donation. A board that fails to lobby vigorously for grants and donations from public bodies is leaving its organisation at a competitive disadvantage relative to other arts organisations and other community projects. It is inappropriate to explore here the intricacies of lobbying. However, any board that is unaware of how to go about it should quickly seek a board member who does.”

## No one expects the Spanish Inquisition

And this is the problem with criticising this book—it may be the product of the best minds we have had running things in Scotland: but it is almost impossible to take seriously. The frightening thing is that CD&S (unchanged for decades) is also touted in a SAC Report on financial monitoring as one of the three things offered to assist the four Scottish national companies—who have merged their administration—from future (further) collapse:

“To assist boards, SAC funds a development programme, produces a publication to assist new board members and trustees to understand their responsibilities and duties, and encourages those with an interest in the arts to become board members. Advice on the range of skills represented on a board which an arts organisation is likely to find beneficial in managing its affairs is also provided.”<sup>18</sup>

Of course sound business sense these days can mean sacking most of your employees and getting things done cheaper, preferably in places where you can get away with murder. But even the consultants for the above report observed an anomaly which underlines the impractical nature of CD&S’ long-term advocacy of simulating an idealised business structure predicated on the profit motive:

“Companies supported by SAC are encouraged to accumulate reserves and provisions, (General Conditions of Grant), because of the lack of any initial capital sum it is extremely difficult for any arts organisation, which is effectively prohibited from generating profit by its charitable aims, to create sufficient contingency against future losses or to make further investment.”<sup>19</sup>

Fundamental criticisms of the Arts Council also point to the organisational secrecy and unaccountability. Although personal enmity motivated the



exchange, this surfaced in the Scottish Executive's questioning of the present chair of the SAC at Select Committee on 16/12/97. Here the chairman is honest enough to state that a genuine appeals procedure rather than the present sham would get in the way of how the SAC does things and the government's immutable plans for the arts:

"[Mr McAllion] What kind of appeals procedure is it that does not even allow the appellant to be present when a decision about them is being taken? This appeals procedure which you operate is honestly unparalleled throughout the whole of government in this country. It would not be tolerated in any other area of government. (Mr Linklater) If you do not mind me saying so, I think you are overstating it. [Mr McAllion] Except the police. Maybe the police would be a parallel but nobody else. (Mr Linklater) I would like to make this central point which I think goes to the heart of what you were saying. If every time The Arts Council either withdrew a grant, withheld a grant, or decided that a revenue funded grant should not be renewed, if every time we took that decision—and we take that kind of decision the whole time, it is part of our duty and our job—an organisation disagreed with that (and of course they disagree, they all disagree with it, I know of no arts organisation that has willingly said, "Thank you for taking away our grant, we are delighted you took that decision", they all oppose it naturally) and you then said that each of those decisions should be a matter for appeal and that an outside independent body should then rule on it, we might as well give up our strategy altogether."

That refers to the old strategy, not the present one, or the new one. Later exchanges reveal that the ideas behind the present restructuring of the SAC were pre-emptive of whatever restructuring the new Scottish Executive would desire.

## Care Diligence & Fascism

The Arts Council struggles with the difficult presence of implementing a government arts policy which the government themselves stated should be judged on their performance directly running the New Millenium Experience Company. I doubt very much that Timothy Mason the director of the Museums and Galleries Commission—which advises rich people on tax avoidance—who left when it was 're-structured' in 2000 (to be run by Lloyd Grossman), will be passing out copies of his CD&S to help Museum directors with their present difficulties. According to an article in the *Evening Standard* 30/10/00 the folly of government 'control' will continue on grander scale. They had been leaked a confidential working paper which said that:

"...the Prime Minister should appoint the chairmen [sic]

of such institutions as the National Gallery, the British Museum, the Science and Natural History Museums and the National Portrait Gallery. Under the proposals, the Culture Secretary would appoint their trustees rather than allowing them to be elected by their own boards. The proposals would have represented a huge concentration of political patronage....the director of one major institution described the original circular as "an absolutely straightforward attempt by central government to control what have until now been independent bodies, and are successful and flourishing because they have always been independent....As fascists have always done, this government is using tidiness as the argument. It is a very totalitarian notion of having power in the centre. It is extremely sinister that they are putting this forward as primary legislation with which they could then do what they wish, and that they are not allowing this consultation document to be available publicly. The conference of National Museum Directors has unanimously voted for it to be made public. The department has refused."

After promising to abandon the ideas and lying to the Directors to shut them up, the Culture Secretary started up the plan again. A *Guardian* report (23/12/00) states that Chris Smith will:

"take away the power of their trustees to elect their own chairperson without consulting the government..."

The latest twist has Smith lying to them again and the process being done through the back door. The good old system of government appointees, political patronage is not discussed in CD&S.

## Pluralism and relations of production

Ultimately government interference, all the criteria and control, makes people reluctant to be honestly creative. It is impersonal. It kills real art, real freedom of expression of the reality of our lives: it makes people frightened to be creative.

CD&S perpetuates hierarchical structures in the arts. It is predicated on the assumption that a form of pluralism exists in the arts at best the book is tenuous and anachronistic. Pluralism holds that power *is distributed* between labour, management and capital (and sometimes customers and clients) and that there is no coercion. A handy illusion which ignores social relations and the exercise of authority.

In art organisations pluralism is rhetorical, while groups and interests dominate agendas behind the scenes. The display of art is thought to advocate liberalism in itself, while the organisational structure (at times secretly) reflects more authoritarian principles the higher one looks. Looking at the arts generally, pluralism is used to

impute impartially upon a hierarchically co-ordinated social organisation which is far from impartial. It is not that pluralism is suppressed; pluralism is itself an illusion.

In CD&S *all* arts policy and practice is supposed to find expression in one inaccurately defined, idealised form of organisation. It is silent on the effect of this, silent on its roots and silent on what forces impinged upon it. It censors and censures awareness of different forms of co-operative or collective structures, dismissing them as early as page 10. This has continued unnoticed for 14 years too many. What comment there is on 'other forms' is deviancy amplification; distortion to magnify relatively minor patterns of stigmatisation, where deviance is the 'unintended' consequence of control and the reaction to stereotypes. CD&S' discourse becomes a ready-made way of thinking with an effect similar to that of ideology—i.e. ruling out alternative ways of thinking and hence preserving a particular distribution of power. In other words discrimination and prejudice.

The government funding system is now the main economy in the arts. No one believes it is democratic in form. CD&S' re-publication comes at an interesting moment, with the Directors of most of our leading artistic institutions now making the claim—the accusation—that the state is undermining their authority with fascist means. They are exaggerating, but at the same time the state's activities do concur with some of fascism's defining characteristics. In the early '90s ex-SAC director Seona Ried (who introduces CD&S) famously stated that the SAC was 'not a democracy'. What is it then? One could easily say that the funding system attempts to create a Malthusian form of organisation i.e. the capacity for reproduction excels the rate at which subsistence can be increased; thus the artistic population should be checked. Artistic poverty is the result of moral licence; upper class moral licence is not a source of poverty.

Do funding bodies—with their systems of political appointees and an ever changing criteria index—believe in evolution? Is it social Darwinism we see? the formulation of laws purportedly similar to natural laws to govern society with the unjust demand that these should be underlying and be irresistible.

## Less medicine is better

They say it is not insanity which creates the need for asylums but rather asylums that create the need for mad people. CD&S' diagnostic categories would seem to express, not a neutral science, but

a set of dominant values which stigmatise and are of uncertain value. It puts forwards an imaginary 'total institution' which can be defined as a number of like-situated individuals cut off from wider society leading the reader towards a closed administrated existence. How many arts organisation in the UK never mind Scotland have both paid "legal advisers" and "company secretaries." Chief executives (which the book states should not be someone with any knowledge of the arts) should be people with "outstanding political and administrative skill." Then the book notes that "many" (in fact it is most) organisations cannot offer enough money to "attract adequate talent—particularly for administration." What does that imply? Is that not something of an insult to practically every arts organisation?

It is only recently that paintings and sculptures became more than commissioned tableaux of government ideology and military conquest. Today, types of government sanction and subsidy, how these are administrated and with what bias, have encouraged a 'gallery system' highly ramified in approach and running parallel to (and becoming little more than) private dealerships—an organisational form which itself has remained largely unchanged for the last 100 years.

A hierarchy of (in descending order): Museum, Modern museum, Contemporary Exhibition Space and then Independent Exhibition Space has evolved to represent a traditional cycle of: hostility, familiarisation, acceptance and absorption. The lower end of this circulation is in many general respects becoming disciplined to reflect and confirm the cultural agenda proscribed by interpenetrations of aspects of government, private sector interest groups and the cultural 'gate keepers' of the day. Unfortunately they are all bickering amongst themselves. Yes, they lack a handbook.

Bureaucracies can embody vicious circles of decreasing efficiency, groups of colleagues often attempt to maximise their freedom of action by paying lip-service to the rules but in reality bending them when they can. That has been how we have all got by. Sociologists say limited information is available to decision-makers regarding alternatives and consequences. This includes subordinates withholding or distorting information so that senior managers do not know exactly what is going on. Senior managers know this so they create more rules to regulate what goes on below them. Hi ho.

But what is needed are chances for those of us who choose to inhabit these institutions (and who are only interested in the money) to adapt and modify formal systems of bureaucratic surveillance. The tactics of bypassing and altering the forces, the modes, the relations of production won't be found in a handbook. The subject of CD&S' helpful hints will be utterly unpersuasive if it says it is about the arts but it offers no assistance to artists and then excludes and ignores the fact that together artists have organised better exhibitions than heavily funded organisations packed with administrators and arts council appointees.

Many artistic 'movements' seem to start as groups of friends (and end as groups of enemies), some never grow beyond that. The majority of 20th century artistic groups conform to this. So would Zurich Dada have benefited if it had become Dada Ltd? Should Apollinaire have went on a management course?

## Notes

1. William Keegan, *Mrs Thatcher's Economic Experiment*, Penguin 1984.
2. *Ibid.* *Private Eye* 1017 states that the CPS were the architects of the privatisation of pensions and the swindling of millions by those companies which supported and financed the CPS.

3. For an overview of the complexities of the period see *Smear!* by Stephen Dorril & Robin Ramsay, 4th Estate, 1991, page 224 - 228. For the reference to Lord Harris see *Free Agent* by Brian Crozier, Harper Collins, 1993, page 122. Peacock himself has connections with the intelligence services through his tenure as an executive director of the Economist Intelligence Unit from '77 to '84, which according to Crozier and other authors had an extremely intimate relationship with MI6.
4. *Sunday Times* 19/2/95.
5. *Financial Times* 9/1/95
6. *Financial Times* 9/1/95. Hopefully it can be seen from this that the IEA have a wide area of interest. Peacock himself has written on "The Composer in the Market place" (1975), "Public expenditure and government growth" (1985) and "Corporate take-overs and the public interest" (1991).
7. *Spectator* 23/4/88
8. CD&S was initially sponsored by IBM UK Holdings PLC, the board of which reads like a who's who of the British State: including, Sir Edwin Nixon (Nat West Bank), Sir Robert Ball (Legal & General), Sir Adrian Cadbury (Bank of England), Lord Chalfont (VSEL), Lord Hunt of Tamworth (BNP, Prudential Corporation), Sir John Kingman (Smithkline Beecham) and Sir Evelyn de Rothschild (N.M. Rothschilds & Sons). Ironically enough IBM threw out their old management practices of vertical integration, when the company lost millions in the early nineties. *No business sponsorship has been found for the latest re-print.*
9. <http://www.currency.com.au/buckle.html>
10. <http://www.mcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/Rowse/Rowse2.html>
11. *Ibid.*
12. <http://www.currency.com.au/buckle.html>
13. *Ibid.*
14. <http://www.earthwatch.org/australia/annrvw.html>. Pascoe—I believe—is now a supporter of the Australian *Earthwatch Institute*. Earthwatch's "unique role in educating the public" and "making a significant contribution to the debate on sustainable development in Australia" is in partnership with Rio Tinto Zinc and models deceptive propagandistic co-operation between the corporate sector and the NGO sector. In 1999, this formed into a partnership with Rio Tinto globally. It also engages in 'partnerships' between the Shell Foundation and DuPont amongst many other corporate funders. Cynics (and the relatives of those who died) will wonder why global land rapists and polluters on the scale of RTZ and Shell indulge organisation like the Earthwatch Institute. Is it to put a PR puff on things such as RTZ's and the Oil companies infamous involvement in Indonesia during probably the worst totalitarian regime the region has seen?
15. <http://www.icclaw.com/l500/formex/pps/ukp4714.htm>
16. <http://www.burness.co.uk/html/partners/profiles/paulpia.htm>
17. [http://www.harbottle.com/i\\_articledetails.asp?type=article&P\\_ID=162&ID=42&SuperID=11](http://www.harbottle.com/i_articledetails.asp?type=article&P_ID=162&ID=42&SuperID=11)
18. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library2/doc11/sacmr-01.asp>
19. *Ibid.*

Ian Brotherhood

# Tales of The Great Unwashed

Starts out with a wee trail of what looks like torn paper and glass shards at the bay-window. It's only seven in the morning but I'm up, as usual, to get Mary roused and ready for school. Thing is, Mary's away three months past, moved in with that lad Peety. He's a trainee draughtsman, his parents are both lecturers in the college. He seems like a nice lad right enough. Bastard.

So at first you would think this is like the trail of a snail or a slug, a sort of shiny thick line, with a wee roundish patch where the thing has turned about to go home. But the living-room is one-up, and the pointing got done year before last, so how them fellas is getting in here I don't know. I bend down and see it's not really a snail-trail, but a scatter of broken glass, tiny pieces flattened into the carpet. The carpet is damp right enough, and if I'm not mistaken there's a smell too, a smell like fusty drink.

I don't drink upstairs. Never have. She didn't like it, so I never did. No-one else uses this room. Mary barely used it what with having her own telly and that, so I can't figure it at all, and it bothers me the whole day.

That night is Christmas Eve, and The Great Unwashed will be closed tomorrow, so it's a late one with just a few of the lads. It wasn't the busiest of nights, but turned over a good few bob right enough, so no harm treating Doghead, Halfpint and Elbow to a few on the house.

Elbow is maudlin and girny, whining about missed chances and lost loves. Halfpint tries to throw in the occasional note of optimism, listing off his existing and imminent grandchildren and great-grandchildren with impressive detail. Only Doghead remains silent, content to savour the free drink in certain knowledge that it will not come from my direction for at least another year.

So what about you anyway Jack? says Halfpint, having exhausted all known statistics relating to his family and desperate not to allow Elbow another shot on the time remaining.

I shrug, swallow the pale remnants of the glass, then turn to pour another. My head is filled with soft pain, the shifting of happy memories against the dismal void I now call future.

Another glass for Halfpint and Bobby Elbow, but only a half lager for Joe, then I look up, meet Halfpint's red-rimmed peepers, and it all comes out. I'm bone weary, sick and have nothing left now that my girl has gone. First her mother, now her. I haven't a thing left apart from this fucked-up pub, and that's nothing to be in love with, nothing to get up for, nothing to take pictures of. There's nothing left for me now, nothing at all, and even if my numbers come up, what would I do now but give most to Mary, split a stack with the lads, and even then, what's to do with whatever's left? No. It's all over.

If I would have had the imagination when young, maybe, if I would have had the gall, maybe. But no. It's been alright. Nothing more than that. It's been alright, and now it's time to start making my way for the exit.

They stay silent. Halfpint nods. Elbow's chin is vibrating, eyes moist. Doghead stares at his glass, oblivious to it all. I've made them even more depressed. I turn, pour another for myself only, then tell them of the stain on the carpet up in the living room, how I can't figure it. It's meant to be a joke, a lightener, but Elbow sparks up, soberish and keen, and asks for more detail. His questions

confuse and irk, so I grab a bottle of Black Bush from the gantry and beckon them follow me upstairs.

I'm telling you Jack, says Elbow as he gets back up from the carpet at the window, it's the wee folk.

The bottle is empty. Doghead has collapsed into the sofa, but his pint remains lodged between his knees, the whisky tumbler settled neatly at the bottom of the larger glass. Halfpint stares out the window, focusing on the distant spot through the buildings opposite to where he imagines home to be. But Elbow seems active and serious now, pointing at the drying slime at the bay window.

That's them been having a party, he says, it's them right enough.

Little people? No way. Never heard any of that kind of talk for years, and even then, from the old dears, it was ever a joke. Leprechauns? Bogles? Hobblyboids? I maybe drew the old Rottenrows under the quilt of an evening if thoughts of those creatures flitted over me, but never lost an hour of sleep on their account, not the once. If you're prone to fright at such a thing you'd be as well surrendering yourself to the Banshees as well, and for all the talk I've heard of them there's never been one tailing my folk about anyway.

Nothing surer, says Elbow, upright, with forefinger pointed at the heavens, it's the unmistakable detritus of souls in limbo.

So I do feel a sort of a shiver then, what with talk of limbo and suchlike, and the shiver sort of stays on longer than a normal shiver would when Halfpint emits a high-pitched wheeze. I turn to see him scuttling behind Doghead's chair.

Elbow's eyes focus on a point somewhere at the base of the window.

Quiet now, says Elbow, slowly lowering himself to the ground, and tying his legs in a way which he bids me ape. Unable to accomplish the posture required, I sit on the deck, grip my knees close to my face, then watch. Elbow has closed his eyes, and is nodding gently at the floor-level juncture of the main and left-hand windows. Halfpint's whimpering is the only sound apart from the distant throb of city-centre traffic.

I close my own eyes, for what seems an instant, but when I open them again I see a black man, about a foot or so in height, peeking from behind the curtain which is gathered at the left-hand end of the bay. He is young, maybe thirty or so, and his expression is delirious, teeth white and parted in silent laughter. I shut my eyes and shake my brain, but when I look again the wee man has emerged from the drapes and is standing, arms wide, directly in front of Bobby Elbow. Although so small, he is well proportioned, if very thin-limbed, with thick dark hair curled tight against his scalp. Even in the confusing light cast by the indoor lamp and the amber outside, I can see his gown is brightest sea-green-blue, and about the broad neckline of the garment gleaming copper bells have been woven into the material. In his right fist is a thin short stick. I strain to keep my eyes open as he moves, and it is a slow, deliberate shift which brings his arms together, his stare all the time focused on the inert Elbow directly before him.

Then he plays a tune on the stick, but I can barely hear it. It is so high, so fine, that it is drowned by the faraway traffic, but I know he is playing something wonderful by the mould of his features, the crease of his brow, the drawing of

breath beneath the gown, and snatches of purest whistle which come to me when his little elbows are joined and at their highest. Elbow remains inert, staring beyond the window.

When the tune has ended, the man taps the stick to his head three times, looks up at the comatose Elbow, then turns to me.

Jack Doohihan! he cries, is this your face?

I can't move my hands, fingers knotted together to hold my knees. But something about my expression must confirm my identity, 'cause he strides closer and waves the flutestick up at me.

If any man here does not care for my tune, let him try to wipe his arse on a pebbledash gable and see how he likes it!

The little man's face is crunched with mirth as he nears me. I feel my breath suspend, my heart bang. He points the stick at me again, then broadens his arms, throws his head back, and laughs.

I am Danda. Danda! My name. True word! My English is bad, but twenty years I am waiting. Twenty years!

Elbow looks to be asleep. Behind me, the combined noises coming from Halfpint and Doghead form a sound somewhere between a snore and a death rattle. It seems I am alone. The little man nears. I have to crane forward to see his face.

You have some trouble mister! My Mercedes is bigger than yours!

I start to speak, but words don't form. He steps back again, looks at Elbow, then raises the flute-stick to his lips, preparing to play again. I'm sure I'm talking then, asking who he is and what he wants but he does not hear or does not want to, and then, as he slumps and lowers the stick to hang limp between his legs, his face becomes so sad that I almost want to pick him up and comfort him. But before I can even untwine my fingers he has gone back behind the curtain, and when I next open my eyes it is with darkest blue sky, almost seven in the morning, and I get up, as always, to ready Mary for school.

Halfpint won't take my call—Jeanie says he got back awful late and made some noises, then she found him pishing in the wardrobe and he's been in bed ever since. Then she hangs up on me. Doghead is likewise unavailable, not having reported home at all—Sippy Pat is just about to leave to search for him. And when I call Elbow it is his daughter who answers—yes, he's in, no, he can't come to the phone, but yes, he'll call me right back.

An hour passes. The Great Unwashed, when quiet and dark, creaks and moans, as if recovering from the demands made of it by regular custom. The floorboards and furniture stretch and breathe—with the heating off, they get some peace. But I don't dally in the bar. All is clean, all shutters shut, all taps turned off. I need a snifter to calm the shakes, but prefer to take it upstairs, in that room. A spell of sorts has been broken. Drink was taken there last night, and no-one to voice objection, so I'll drink there again. Now.

Mary called early to say Happy Christmas, and she'll be up to see me as soon as they get back from London. He's friends down there who'll put them up, and they'll be staying, even for the Bells. She knows I'm disgusted and knows I know she knows it, but we exchange adult niceties and I hold my tongue. Fair do's.

But sitting in this chilly room now is defiance. I defy the dark-skinned ghost to appear again. I

defy the disappearance of friends who were so happy to join my company only hours ago, when the drink was free of charge and no bells would ring them off the premises. I defy the losses I have suffered in this life. I'm still here, in my pub, drinking good whisky honestly earned, at a time of year when others of my age are running hither and yon at the command of upstart youngsters. This is a free shop. Mine is a free life. I owe no-one. I will continue. I will...

When I snap awake, he is standing between my knees, his face mangled with anger.

You are Jack! he shouts, and I feel the sudden shock of liquid on my thigh as my tumbler slips, but I cannot move my eyes from his.

Mister Doohihan, I will do this job, a very big job for you. I will go when I do it, and you will be thanking Danda when he is gone. If there is anyone who does not know what my job is, and why I do it, let him drink two pints of bad palm wine and see how he likes it!

The little man moves away to the bay window, towards the point where I first saw him, But now the drapes are down, slung across the angled junctures of central and side outlooks. He takes the flute-stick from somewhere inside his rough blue gown and taps the skirting board.

In here! he shouts then, turning briefly to raise the stick at me before once again tapping the upper ridge of the long low panel. The noise is hollow and surprisingly loud.

They are in here now! he cries again, and he's dropped the stick and his tiny fingers are gripped behind the board at spaces where paint has not filled the warped skirting. He hauls and heaves, soles prised against the board, but there isn't so much as a squeak.

I shift forward in the armchair. It is real enough. I am awake. Head spinning, sure, but awake. I slip off the chair to my knees and crawl towards the window. The little man picks up his flutestick and steps back as I near.

Danda starts to play as I fumble in my pocket for the knife. It's a corkscrew, a folding one with small blade for cutting wine-seals. It is only one long, hard swipe to cut the seal of old paint layers which bind the board to the plaster and thickened paper, and the little man jumps back as I haul the skirting from it's place to lie face down on the carpet. There is a billow of dust, cobweb threads flutter up towards me. Danda coughs.

They are in there ! Be rid of them Jack, they are no good for you. They want to eat the world!

I lower my face to the floor. The stoor lines my nostrils, sends me back to childhood nights when I stayed up late watching the dark sea roar while sucking on old lace curtain. I hear Danda snort behind me as I peer into the recess.

There, in the dusty space, on antique floor-board, amidst scuttling slaters and the shifting of a scrawny white spider, three figures no bigger than my thumb face me. They are dressed in grey, perhaps once white, and tiny sparkles about their hands and neck betray the presence of cheap and tired jewellery. They are moving, but eyes are

closed, hands clasped over their ears. I know I've seen them before, but the shock of seeing them here must be evident in whatever noise it is that I emit. I sit up, draw the blade close on the tool, and feel my breath shallow.

Them is heeby-jeeby fellas to cause you trouble! Maybe your missus called them to here, but the missus is away now. They stay! Always they stay. They want to eat the world!

Of course, it is them. I put my head down to have another look, and they've not moved, although their hips still sway, their tiny expressions jerk, their mouths gape and close in perfect unison. It is the Bee Gees, no doubt about it.

I tolerated them during those years when Mary's Mum pinned to be out jiggling and making merry, those same years I confined her to toil behind the bar downstairs. I hated them as much as she loved them, and our love and hate of them grew as did our fight for dominance. When we knew Mary was on the way, it calmed, but I still recall sweating, panicking during post-Old-Firm-rush, when she was heavy with our lass but could not help out, snatches of Stayin' Alive and More than a Woman reaching me from the upstairs bedroom, the falsetto harmonies screaming a protest of enjoyment lost, freedom stolen.

My body spasms with fright as the shattering volume of the phone fills the room. A movement to my side, Danda is heading for the right hand drape, his brilliant blue gown swirling and billowing, and by the time I look back into the dimness below the bay, more dust has been raised by the panicked Gibb brothers. I squint and strain to make out any trace, and fancy I see a lightly bearded face disappear at the point where floor-board meets masonry.

Elbow is apologetic and enthusiastic in equal measure. He double-checked with his Aunt, and yes, she agrees that it's likely the wee people. Yes, he'll check out Danda in the books, and yes, he knows now what to do about it all. He'll be with me before midnight. I get back in the armchair, stare at the spot where the trio had been performing, and knot my fingers to stop them reaching for the Bushmills. Bobby is good to his word, and I've a generous measure down my neck between his ringing the bell and me opening the door to him. He raises a stern and open palm when I lift the bottle afront his pale face, and asks me to take him to the kitchen. He scouts about in the cupboards and oven, then drags out the biggest pot, the heavy-based wing-handled affair we use for the soup. He passes me the lid, tells me not to ask, so I don't.

Now then, where's this Danda fellow? he asks, so we venture back upstairs. Elbow drags a hard-backed stool over beside my armchair, settles the giant pot in front of him, folds his jacket into a rough cushion, settles his arse, rolls a cigarette, and then accepts a dram. I replenish mine. All is quiet.

He wants out, says Elbow, the wee man wants out. He's a fictional character from a novel by a Nigerian lad called Nwankwo. It was published

way back, early sixties or such, so he might've been here for a while.

Twenty years, I say then, recalling the wee man's words. He said twenty years he's been waiting.

Well then, says Elbow, that's at least twenty years worth of wee folk you've got creeping about. Likelihood is the place got cleaned out regular before then, but since you've been here they've been building up. You could have all sorts in the stonework, in the cellar, the attic. There's nowhere they can't call home, so we'd best be about it and get the decks cleared.

Where did he come from? I ask then, and Elbow shakes his head, grim faced but loving it.

Someone put him in here, but it's you wants him out. That's why he's asking you. I can't see him, so he's asking you to help him get out.

Me? I pour another one and very much want to cry. I tell Elbow about the Bee Gees being behind the skirting, and he smiles and nods.

It's par for the course, he says, but it's not usual to find them in there. More often it's likes of behind a boiler or a radiator, anywhere there's a wee bit extra heat. They like the warmth. Sometimes they go under the sink if there's hot water on the go a lot, but they can make a right mess of the pipework with them teeth. Aye, you're best rid of them right enough.

And then it all happens. Danda appears, arms flailing, from behind Elbow's chair. I steady myself, Bobby notices my face, follows my stare, but registers nothing.

He's back, I say, and Elbow drags the heavy steel lid from the pot.

Danda runs for the door, and I follow, Bobby close behind with the pot swinging from one arm, the lid from the other. Danda halts on the landing, checks back to see how close we are, then starts banging with open palms on the door of the Glory Hole, a long thin room crammed with all manner of shite accumulated these past two decades.

Heeby Jeeby fellas in here now! shouts Danda, so I haul the door open, and in we go.

Suitcases crammed with old photo albums and diaries, boxes of Mary's schoolbooks and jotters, three sets of golf clubs Doghead turned up with one night, a primitive television set, the top half of a standard lamp that used to have pride of place in the Snug, all are thrown out onto the landing before Danda screams and points his flutestick—right there at the base of an old Calor gas heater, arms wide in panic, his feet flitting with fear, there is the middle of the brothers, forget his name, the one with the baldy patch, and I snatch him up and pass him to Elbow.

Bobby stares at me as if I have lost it, but then I remember he cannot see the wee man.

That's one, I assure him, and lower the creature into the giant pot. Elbow slides the lid back over as I strain to see where Danda has now gone.

Half an hour later, we have them. The oldest one, the one with the big hair, he made a decent fist of it and tried to bite as I lifted him, but the other one came quietly enough, no doubt pining



for his siblings. But Danda isn't done—he climbs on, over the stacked boxes, to a recess of the hole which has not been visited for many years. These are Mary's baby clothes and toys, carefully newspapered, preserved for her adulthood, for her own children. But they too are shifted roughly in the search. My back is glowing with pain, sweat running like tears as I haul the boxes aside, following the angle of Danda's flute. A crate of her Mum's records and tapes gets in the way as well, but once that's out the road you can see a small shape shivering, the wee head buried into its belly, and when I lift it up it moans low and mean, like a scared cat. It is no bigger than a newborn kitten as well, and I don't much like the feel of it, cold and grimy as it is, but when I put it into the pot and it slides down the cusp of the steel base to settle against the covered forms of the unprotesting Bee Gees, it uncurls itself and leaps up towards the rim of the pot with a despairing howl, eyes wide, teeth bared. Even in the dim light, the moustachioed face is instantly familiar, and I realise that I have just captured a middle-aged Omar Sharif.

Danda climbs and searches further, delving into spaces and patches of darkness whose contents I cannot even begin to recall. The weight of objects denies me access, so I'm relieved when, after much tapping and scraping and growling, Danda emerges, every bit as frantic as before, runs from the Glory Hole and starts leaping down the stairs one at a time, his gown filling with each jump.

Now they are running! Danda shouts as we follow him down to the bar.

By the scuffling and scraping you can tell that we've cornered a good stack of them in the recess where the puggy and juke-box stand. Bobby lays down the pot and stands a three-legged stool atop to keep the lid firm as we shift the furniture, then we set about the panelling. It comes away with a surprising ease I make a mental note of—that was Doghead's work. But when the final pins pop and the plywood sheet gives, there's twenty or more of them huddled against the plasterwork—most of them I don't recognise, but there's a young Michael Parkinson, Tina Turner before she got the big wigs on her, Charlton Heston in his Dynasty outfit, Johnny and the Self Abusers, frilly Prince when he was purple-daft, the starving wean with the tin your man McCullin took a picture of, and they're all like backing up against each other, faces front as I pluck them off and plop them in the pot. Some do get away. Danda does his best to shepherd them my direction with his flutestick, but Bobby Elbow is no use in this regard.

By the time we have moved, under Danda's instructions, to the Snug, Elbow is white and tiring.

I don't know if I can take much more, he says, and I look at Danda, who nods his agreement.

The ones will stay who want the most to stay, Danda says, and then he starts tapping half-heartedly on the base of the corner-piece sofa which was here before I even clapped eyes on the place.

There's a sound of things unsticking themselves when we pull the unit from the wall. Danda has gone up onto the thing, and is flaked out, exhausted. Bobby backs off, sits on the pot-lid, then cradles his head in his palms.

I peek behind the detached unit. A grimy fork, a red-striped straw, bright orange isosceles of carpet mimicking the brown everyday version. Nothing untoward there. I bend down to pick up the rough line of coins which have dropped through the arse-end of the furniture—a good few tens and twenties, even a nugget and a couple of fifties, and I'm stretching to reach another pound when the arms shoot out from the darkness and

grab my wrist, a matted hairy head is upon my forearm biting deep and hard, and I haul myself back upright with the thing snarling and coughing like a forty-a-day pit-bull.

I'm on my back then, the thing flung high and hard overhead, and when I get up it's Danda who has it cornered at the Fire-Exit. I step hesitantly towards the door. Elbow drags the pot across, one hand firmly about the handle, the other keeping the lid down as Sharif and his more vocal co-prisoners continue to bang and holler. I can hear my own panicked breath as I focus on the dim figure who now beckons us nearer with clawed fingers—this creature is much bigger than all the others, and when I make out who it is I know I shouldn't be surprised. It's a substantial Rod Stewart, perhaps sizes with Danda, but mean and drunk and still traces of acne about him. It's a young one, fit and ready to scrap.

Elbow looks at me, unknowing, but trusting still. I don't fancy tackling the thing. But Danda has the stick to his lips, and then, as soft and high as human ear can hear, the strains of Sailing flow about the lounge. It was ever a favourite of Mary as well as her Mum. Danda even crouches as he plays, intent on the tune as the shaking Rod calms, then lends his world-weary voice to the tune. Danda nods in approval. Even Sharif's protests are quieted as the second verse ends, and by the time the final lament is mid-way, even I can see that Stewart is spent, chest heaving, tears streaming, and he is hoisted into the pot with no great protest to join the swaying chorus of little people. It is as happy an ending as could be hoped for. When we open again for Boxing Day, all are happy to partake of the Festive Broth. It's a simple lentil concoction, but with a French bread roll on the side and a wee red napkin, it's a nice present to all the regulars and newcomers alike. It's all done by tea-time, and I make a point of washing the pot myself.

It wasn't pleasant filling the thing with the water, and even less pleasant having to hold the bastard lid down as they made their final protests. But as Elbow's Aunt told him, it's the only way to be sure. Only Danda was happy to climb in with the others.

If any man does not like his life, let him try the life of another and see how he likes it! Now I can taste real palm wine again!

We put another smaller pot of water on top to seal it, then waited, and it was another half bottle was done by the time the steam pulsed the end and we could go to the lounge to watch the box and try to start to forget it all. Some folk leave their dreams behind them, despite them, traces that won't be killed when events swamp. Mary must have done that, in her young way, as her mother did in hers. And mine were there too, as well as those of the many folk who lived and died here before us.

I suppose I cheated. Before Danda had finished the vodka he claimed to remind him of his beloved palm wine, and before Elbow had got back from the bog, I got on the oven glove, slid the lid over, and drew out the young Tina. She kicked, I let her go. She scampered across the worktop and behind the microwave before I even had the lid back in place. Sometimes now, when the place is quiet, when rain isn't lashing and wind isn't battering and shitehawks aren't screaming their get-up calls, on nights when I'm wondering about Mary and her Mum and all the what-ifs and the maybes and the what-to-nows, sometimes I catch a snatch of Nutbush from somewhere next door, in that front room, and I allow my uncovered Rottenrows to tap along.

# Contracted Culture

The public (including artists) are not allowed to interject at the Scottish Arts Council's public meetings. They are not allowed to say anything at all. It is an Athenian Democracy but everyone must be gagged. Clearly, going through the motions for the media and Scottish Executive is not an embrace of public scrutiny. Despite harassing everyone else for ever larger audience figures, the SAC has failed to motivate any public attendance for these muted shows. Yet, in spite of their stiltedness, insights into the SAC's shadowing of Cultural Policy and indications of subsequent fads can be gathered there, for those who attend. The question still has to be asked, is this the state of affairs everyone wants?

In contrast, recent artist-run events in Scotland have encouraged debate on a wide range of issues affecting artists. Events such as the series of panel discussions accompanying *PLANO XXI* (an artist-curated event of Portuguese contemporary art and music at venues across Glasgow) and *I Love Alternative Spaces* (organised by the 'artist-led' Collective Gallery in Edinburgh). To their benefit, these events avoided the trite parading of supposedly progressive artist-run projects. Instead the participants took up the task of exploring the socio-economic conditions in which artists live and work. Far from 'moaning and whining', these events had an air of urgency about them.

Drawing from these events and a bin-full of Cultural Policy material, this article is an attempt to position current influences on artists and artist-run projects; to question the authenticity of artists' alleged 'independent' status, and to speculate on the wider implications for artists and artist-run projects in the face of the current political re-organisation and exploitation of Culture.

## Domestication

The received wisdom amongst artists is of the vitality and independence of the Contemporary Visual Arts in Scotland, that they are "self-sustaining." In contradiction to this asserted potency, another all too common assertion (often in the same breath) is that contemporary artists' networks in Scotland are lacking "a market."

While certain aspects of the visual arts' infrastructure in Scotland has been publicly funded by the Scottish Arts Council's Visual Arts Department—which is not to claim a democracy of allocation—there is no domestic private dealership system which ultimately supports this type of work. Yet the public funding mechanisms have functioned in absence of this dealership, supporting a concept of work that is fundamentally premised on its circulation as a unique commodity and, in tandem with the art schools, abetted in internalising the narrow view of such an individualistic system's 'reward capacity'.

As a consequence of this market hyperbole, private dealers stake a minor amount of capital in the contemporary visual arts in the UK yet hold a dominant position in the minds of the majority of artists and public funders. The lack of such an explicit dealership body resident in Scotland is peddled—by public funders and artists alike—as an obstruction to greater access to a mythologised 'free' market. As if the existence and localisation of private finance capital inclined to speculate in the contemporary visual arts somehow finalise a greater Cultural maturity.

The deception is of a direct correlation between the artist's symbolic value accrued in the public sector and a monetary value within the private sector. That the symbolic value of the artist and work can immediately translate into monetary reward. It is an attempt at legitimising public spending on cultural production on the back of a particular economic mechanism, one which documents artist-led activity as nothing other than a feeder system for the private sector.

## Malignant benevolence

But public funding is not only to legislate as a research-and-development instrument for the benefit of an allegedly remote market. The Visual Arts Department at the SAC also have the task of coercing artists and arts organisations to conjure both a domestic and international market for the purpose of gradually superseding aspects of the SAC's own role. A surrogate commercial sphere will be created, therefore marketisation is necessary and will be instilled through a managerial discourse imposed on the public sector.

The Visual Arts Department needs no help in condemning its own existence, and more broadly that of the SAC's—in campaigning for the market exploitation of culture it (mis)aligns freedom of expression with the 'free' market. It contrasts the private sector as a disinterested unrestricted space where 'anything goes', against public money's rationed resources and creatively prohibitive criteria. Sadly, private finance does not work that way. It is conservatively speculative. Seeking to appeal to the largest common denominator it reinforces orthodoxy. Far from being innovative it is self-replicating in mimicking tried-and-tested 'formulae for success'. If the Visual Arts Department look to commercial qualities as principle indicators of worth, they will cease to fund 'cultural activity' that is distinguishable from a broader marketisation and circulation of products already in existence.

The public funding system has helped sustain (if not wholly understood) the social world of the economy of the contemporary visual arts—rather than supporting an infrastructure which tackles deficiencies in the relations of production and enables access to the means of production and distribution. Supposedly it uses private capital (in the form of taxes) to offset disproportionate distribution of opportunity and representation. But the system has been given over to enhancing concentrations of wealth and their influence.

Commercial sponsorship often seeks to associate with the 'social world' aspect of conspicuous consumption, which is taken to be as equally important as any capacity for production—the cliché: "you don't sell a product, you sell a lifestyle." Central to this is a quasi-version of a concept of art that celebrates individualism by means of the idea of the self-motivating and self-creating artist who embodies a heightened and highly valued subjectivity.

Within the artist-lead sector the social-scene—the circulation of fashion in clothing, music, etc.—has become increasingly foregrounded to the point of stylistic association and accumulation not just acting to re-inforce the social structure but becoming the very work. Accompanying this turn in practice has been a return to a notion of the modernist autonomous art object—not that anyone remembers it going away. Locked in its white walled cell seemingly arrested from any external distraction or stimuli, its ambiguousness is mitigated by a belief in the power of the work to express itself, of the transparency of high culture. This 'return' can be understood in part as a reaction to increasingly exclusionary public funding criteria, the seemingly economic impoverishment of the public sector, and an internalisation of an agenda of macho self-reliance and a fantasy of freedom from social constraint. 'Independent' and 'alternative' as banded around the artist-led scenes relate less, if at all, to the ideological basis of the work but more to the economic impoverishment of the practitioners.

## The breakers' yard

Having asserted the key role that the public funding bodies play for the arts in Scotland, the explicit shift in these bodies has been from one of an image of an advocate of cultural space based on democratic freedoms and rights, residually open to further development and radicalisation, to one of a more explicit 'cultural broker'. With yet another rear-garde adoption of enterprise rhetoric, the Visual Arts Department at the SAC has started making claims to being a 'development agency', advocating a role in brokering relations between public and private monies using leverage of public funds as inducement for arts organisations.

It would seem both arts organisations' and comparatively the Visual Arts Department's 'public accountability' is to be measured by the SAC, and in turn the Scottish Executive, in organisations' ability to gratify the private sector in a diminishing of the Department's role as a funding body in what were its established areas of support—for aspects of the arts to become primarily dependent on and channelled by private sources. In explicitly aligning Culture with commercial values in this way, the SAC has (supposedly unproblematically) substituted a cultural prerogative for a more conspicuous commercial competitiveness. To participate in pronouncements of "self-sustainability" is effectively to allude to and reinforce the compounding of the public sphere with the commercial, a stripping-back and commodification of the properties of the public sector altogether.

## "When they hear the word Culture, they reach for their management tools."

There is another strand of pressure currently being brought to bear on public funding bodies such as the Scottish Arts Council and Local Authorities—the 'issues of purpose' of public money are to be more explicitly allied with the government's fancies of social policing. This has manifested primarily through the Scottish Executive's National Cultural Strategy, itself an adjunct of the government's Social Inclusion hyperbole.

All cultural production has a political existence in that it either challenges or supports the dominant myths a culture calls 'truths', it participates in the circulation of relative values and meanings, and there is an unacknowledged struggle over who determines this or these 'truths'. Cultural practices and institutions that make meaning, where symbolic communication is the main purpose, are being brought to heel through pressure exerted via public funding mechanisms. The public funding mechanisms themselves are being steadily reeled in by government with the objective of their 'issues of purpose' augmenting other areas of government policy, such as 'education', 'urban regeneration' and whatever else takes their fancy.

Art—more broadly Culture—is now to serve highly prescriptive social and economic ends, and, as a medium of making sense of the world, exploited to influence the perception of weaker state responsibility as unavoidable. This aligning of arts' funding priorities to other fields of government policy—and their financial resources—could be interpreted as what is meant by 'joined-up government'.

For the SAC, claiming to be working "with greater flexibility and effectiveness" means contorting itself to best fit the uncomfortable mould of its new task masters.

## The free Market is compulsory

'Culture' is seen as constituting a particular field

# Leigh French

of government, on which there is heightened emphasis with new-Labour. Its vague yet viral promotion of a 'Culture Industry' can be understood as a PR distraction, the surrogate for an economy based on manufacturing. New-Labour poses state intervention for a 'new economy' as seeking to influence the public perception on which it hazards this phantasmagoric 'new' economy to be contingent. With the constitutionally limited remit of the Scottish Executive this is even more exposed.

Within an ideology of 'governing by influencing cultures of behaviour' Culture is treated as one instrument of social influence. Government's means of enshrining and invoking market values through the public sphere—its Third Way melange. In what is a standardising of its subject audience within a delimited culture of 'Common Purpose', Culture is to be re-organised on custodial grounds of 'moral supervision', intimately related to perverted versions of self-reliance and free enterprise. It is to abet in confirming rather than contesting 'free' market authority. The spin is: the 'socialisation' of those as seen as outside of the labour market via the reinforcement of an image of self-esteem through a work-ethic—an expansion of 'training programmes' targeting the unemployed, single-parents, and now pivotally children and young people. As a means to exert influence over 'cultures of behaviour' on target sections of the population, Culture has become the polite and less alarming synonym for Society.

Under the guise of inclusiveness, there is a tension between a commitment to free access to public museums and galleries with their new task of improving the social fabric of society in the form of an accentuated individual responsibility, and market principles that require the generation of private income as a leisure attraction. Pressure is on arts organisations to become magically self-sustaining by creating and increasing their private proportion of income whilst demonstrating a cathartic educational function. (The fact is that this has been going on long enough for everyone to conclude that this is not going to happen.) As a result the programming of these venues is required to appeal to a construct of the widest possible audience (yet paradoxically specifically for the young) and for it to be repositioned in terms of a consumer base contained within a pseudo-populist rhetoric of moral renewal.

## Oiling the wheels of the new moral machinery

In ratifying 'marketisation', artists are also being demoted to a client group (fodder) for an ascending private training/ administrative/ commissioning sector. This is a consequence of outsourcing from the public to the private sector and the naturalisation (or at least tacit acceptance) of a perception of a necessity for art to be complicit with state propaganda amongst this professional managerial class. With new-Labour soliciting a ménage à trois between government, the voluntary and private sectors, public funding is ceded in the form of a financial exchange, with virtual set briefs of their 'priorities' appearing as projects up for tender.

Under the guise of public funds being publicly accountable, there is a bovine bureaucratic migration towards the view that artists are in need of administering, guiding, training, mentoring, advising, re-skilling so as to be equipped to pay lip service to other fields of government policy. Helpfully this will also provide the subjugated mass for the expanding private managerial trade itself, with a vague objective of artists becoming trainers, mentors, advisors, re-skills of the jobless themselves in a kind of cycle of abuse in job-creation jobs.

This is a coercive attempt at a redesignation of

the locus of aesthetic practice, announced as an attempt to make art 'useful', and superimpose a correlative 'publicly accountable' end product. Culture itself is to be the aggressive conditioning influence on the 'wayward' segments of society—there is to be no room for discontent within culture, for a critique of power relations which implies a struggle with hegemonic powers. For this would bring to light the ideas which underlie and represent the vested interests of retarding independent progression and freedoms.

## Dispensing with distance

Much of what now constitutes the domain of the contemporary visual arts is an effect of other kinds of forces and relations of power, of a ruinous and opportunistic alignment of arts funding to other areas of government policy by government—to the extent of the Scottish Executive commanding direct jurisdiction over projects such as the highly suspect programme of 'Cultural Co-ordinators in Schools', announced as part of the National Cultural Strategy. Concern raised within the SAC is that the programme looks set to avoid its influence altogether; more importantly this would totally evade the vestigial political disclaimer of the Arts Council's "arms length" adage. The concerted force of influence is made explicit with the recent clarification from the Department of Culture Media & Sport in England that where the Scottish Executive ordains SAC involvement in delivering the priorities of the National Cultural Strategy, SAC can now explicitly solicit organisations. Moreover, in the event of those prioritised activities not being undertaken by any existing organisation, SAC can now concoct one with the explicit function of condoning the National Cultural Strategy—the erroneous assumption being it is in the interests of its own survival to do so. (These revised solicitation processes were announced and then agreed by Council in November 2000.)

With the SAC being reeled-in to become more of a direct apparatus of government—another threat of a "bonfire of the Quangos" hanging over them, the increasing "integration of Lottery and voted funds work", and Lottery still centrally defined from London—its function is not to encourage but explicitly intervene and impose what is espoused as legitimate cultural activity. The implications for policing and censorship are obvious. There will be very little resistance: in effect the funding system of reinforcement and reward has already been sufficiently internalised, and on the rare occasion when broached, too readily dismissed as nothing more than a survival tactic for artists and organisations alike. Intellectual honesty is not required.

Far from their pro-active independent image, many arts organisations are re-inventing themselves in a subservient supply and demand relationship to public funding criteria. With revenue funding for smaller organisations in question (especially within the Visual Arts) and private capital a figment of someone's sick imagination, 'educational workshops' for which funding is available are considered a justifiable survival tool for the rest of the artistic programme. It may just be out of such false realism that artists and organisations are participating (if colluding is too strong) in the integration of their more overt regulation.

"Their spiritual make-up has become elastic enough to make the constant doubt about their own pursuits part of their quest for survival. They know what they do, but they do it because, in the short run, the objective situation and the instinct for self-preservation speak the same language and tell them it must be so. Others would do it anyway, perhaps worse."

**Peter Sloterdijk, *Cynicism—The Twilight of False Consciousness***



'Innovative' or 'marginal' cultural practices are being lost sight of in the interpretations and implementations by public funding agencies of overarching cultural policy directives—directives once claimed to come from 'consultation' with 'The Sector' itself. Consistently, what pass as alleged consultative and policy informing events are little more than one area of government (to varying degrees of power) talking to another in their various guises, re-inforcing the agenda of the day, re-affirming the message that is denied as being anything other than apolitical 'common sense'.

"[T]hat a political party or movement becomes hegemonic when it succeeds in normalising (or naturalising) its conception of the world—in making its world-view part of the cultural and political common sense, while simultaneously discrediting alternative worlds views."

**Jacinda Swanson; *Self help: Clinton, Blair and the politics of personal responsibility, 'Radical Philosophy'***

Absolute codes of behaviour based on adherence to work-ethic priorities, consensus and central regulation abound as bureaucratic policy makers try to dictate the very terms of support and arts officers in turn interpret and peddle this cultural governance. Far from challenging this set of events, artists and artists' organisations in speculating in a competition for funding (wittingly or not) act to reinforce the tenuous grounds on which its allocation is based. Who remembers the initial moral flurry when the Lottery was first introduced as a potential means of additional funding, and how many now even question the extent of its overtly prescriptive criteria? The atomising of funding—the advent of deterministic funding streams for specified areas of activity, and one-off project funding—has peculiarly been allowed to act as the means of greater influence and closer regulation over those gaining receipt. A kind of amnesia, or self-denial, has set in as organisations continuously re-invent and re-align themselves to annual, schizophrenic alludings to 'prioritisations'. For those that the current 'prioritisations'—cunningly devised fables—may in fact appear to benefit, there again seems to be little questioning of the structural conditions that spawned them, a disinterested "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

Acceptance of short-termism is to the detriment and exclusion of others despite all the redemptive claims. When resources are presented as scarce and competition for them high—a self-interested 'get it while you can' mentality proliferates. (Meanwhile there's more money sloshing around the coffers than ever before.) What real independence is fostered in the 'independent sector', when all policy towards it must reinforce the dumb acceptance of this system of 'cultural rationing'—gently explaining that there can only be room for x,y or z and that it is perfectly acceptable for independence to be explicitly excluded by government—in the name of cultural diversity and inclusion.

There appears to be little resistance to being over determined by relations that fix artists and artists' organisations as always-ever affectively subordinate to an externally devised and politically rigid agenda. The Year of the Artist is perhaps a prime example, where the discourses of the artists

(those that survive the system of vetting) are allowed to exist: but only if safely contained within the primary narrative of the Year of the Artist's pan-promotionalism.

The mantras of managerial efficiency, entrepreneurialism, and individual responsibility have over-run the public sphere and been consolidated under the new-Labour government's Third Way aberration. At the bottom end of this, the Visual Arts Sector, we see an illusion of sustenance by a mix of private patronage (spurred on by the state conducting itself like some tawdry cheerleader) and public patronage in the guise of a 'culturally generative force'.

## Propaganda of Individualism

Within the art schools the charismatic artists' 'do-it-yourself' rhetoric acts to conflate the existing sets of relations between the various speculating agents in the field of cultural production, neglecting the cumulative effects that have, and persist to cause, cultural capital to attract cultural capital, sustained by unquestioned notions of individualism. It has become a conventional and convenient facade that tends to obscure the relations of power while suggesting that everyone may simply choose to participate once equipped with the correct inclinations.

"[F]ocusing on individual agency and responsibility, such economic common sense plays an important ideological function in diverting attention away from structural conditions and differential power relations. Instead it blames bad economic conditions on the vice [failure] of individuals... The language of personal responsibility thereby reinforces a de-politicised conception of the economy... locating the solution to economic and social problems in the reform of individuals' character and not in government or community efforts to alter structural conditions or relations."

**Jacinda Swanson; *Self help: Clinton, Blair and the politics of personal responsibility, 'Radical Philosophy'***

## Structural unemployment

Public funding is increasingly cut according to unproven government theories whilst simultaneously shifting the attention of solving structural problems away from government and onto individuals without the resources. Social and economic problems are re-conceived as problems of the individual, including their causes and solutions. The visual arts in Scotland are not an autonomous entity of their own devising but comprise of sites of interconnection and contestation between various bodies: local/ regional/ central government funding mechanisms (with all the shifting 'prioritisations' and 'issues of purpose' they carry with them); the corporate/ private sector; the Scottish Art Schools; workshop providers; individual artists and artists' networks. We must then view that which manifests as The Visual Arts in relation to the social/ political/ economic environment that exerts influence over its production and dissemination.

One outcome of the demands placed on artists' spaces through the public funding mechanisms to 'professionalise' their 'casual' labour structures has been their recent embracing of New Deal work experience placements. Surrounding such 'training opportunities' is the illusion of successful



trainees gaining a toe-hold in the labour market. Needless to say such work experience programmes do not actually create any jobs. Rather, in re-articulating a surplus of subsidised labour they—ironically—act to arrest any such occasion, providing the foundation for a high turn over of labour generally within the field, exacerbating competitiveness for existing jobs. So, while New Deal is opportunistically seen by arts organisations as another funding stream their actions are complicit in adding to the broader illusion of progression in the labour market. The same thing will happen on a wider scale to organisations.

## Arrested Development

It has been argued that artists' self-determination and individual agency was in part a critical project in its own right—exposing and circumventing unequal power relations; questioning assumptions of debilitating models of what constitutes 'the centre' and 'the periphery'; challenging the values associated to legitimate modes and courses of dissemination; entering into and propelling alternate fields of discourse...

Much of what passes as artist-run is being made to fixate on success and value as adjudicated via a pseudo-economic relation of profit making ability. This is defined by a weak and experimental formulation of market integration: in reality government deception towards individualising political problems. Increasingly self-censoring in adherence to these funding priorities, has resulted in an arresting of the imagination of what can constitute the politics of independent practice. This generalised submission to government/market jurisdiction (where perhaps there was a self-consciousness; an idealism of alterity; or at least a more self-aware, critical relationship before) has been a recuperation of a model of independent artist-led activity (personal responsibility) into a government propaganda model that exculpates flexible yet weak and insecure conceptions of employer and government responsibility.

It is hard to believe that historically this alignment was the aim of artist-run spaces, that subservience and not independence was the goal. There is need to position this debate within the context of the larger neo-conservative political agenda, but there is also need to investigate the social and ideological positions taken up by artists and arts administrators so as not to absolve them—us—of responsibility for the situations we find ourselves in.



# 20 reviews – 20 mins

## Mr Tayto & Mr Tayto

### CITY CENTRE

#### **Vivre sa merde, Transmission.**

Centrally situated in city, on main bus route, towards the end of winter. Simply the best in high quality blends of stylish intelligent French design and value for money, in an expensive demi-monde. The dream of total theatre, is still a dream.

#### **Lesiureland, Tramway.**

Philippe Parreno and Pierre Huyghe have proceeded like men of experience in this business, and taken the natural road to undermine most with their big videos, very shiny shoes and long expanses of boredom.

#### **Sticky Carpet, Project Room.**

This whole matter of boozy underfelt gives the rank conception, or migrating sensation of a potato-faced man clad in a toga of servile retribution. The Devil! Pooh!

#### **Anomalous Phenomena, Free Gallery.**

We started cracking open the champagne, fell into a bottle and stayed there. We were absolutely smashed. There was an eeriness, a strange panic and hushed desperation, evident on the faces of the devoted before we woke up the next morning with our first hangovers since 1994. But we couldn't believe our bleary eyes when stunning Suzi snubbed our advances.

#### **Mandelson of Rio, Gallery Charisma.**

Describing the horrendous anthropocentrism of the '50s interests us enormously, but not as much as the old habits of rabid and bigoted partisanship.

#### **The TuckShop, Intermedia.**

You use a glass mirror to see your face; we use fresh and vivid beauty to see our soles.

#### **Alison Watt: Sheet Folder, The Modern Institute.**

High tech sex and filth intertwining doctrine and method from the air guitarist of horny duvet sets and hospital corners. Put this one on your wedding list for a few jejune points.

#### **The Schaffhausen Videonale 2000, Kunsthalle Germany.**

The curators of this years Videonale somehow seem to have settled for nothing less than a celebration of polysemy single channel Cornwallisation. Billy Chapel is one of many up and coming video nasties (by far the best). His installation 'The Wurst is yet to come' involves a video projection of a sausage on a plate being eaten. This seems a little old fashioned and some might say (Oasis) outdated, but Chapel's uniqueness has not yet been revealed and the fact he

audaciously made the video projector sit inside a 6ft long (2ft diameter) block displays potential. Personally I didn't need to see the small sign saying 'do not eat the sausage'.

#### **Supernatural Behaviour for the Festive Season, Fly Gallery.**

A shark adventure to really get your teeth into, the ultimate rat-on-the-wall 'will they won't they?' rockumentary for mumbling apostles of the moderne.

#### **'It is not the society that seems ridiculous to me, it is mankind', Sebastian Coe gallery, Southampton.**

Five times this year, shows have existed. Sebastian shows himself to have emotive language, providing philistinism that confronts middle class cinnamon protocol.

### CAPITAL CITY

#### **The Umpire Strikes Back, Collective Gallery.**

Smooth blend of undetermined cricket, baroque music and profoundly big backlit hair.

#### **Astroturf Castles, Protayto Academy.**

Witness my death to vanity. Less ornamental 'action', more talk depending on a further auxiliary language. Waco 2: the comeback

#### **Too Close for Comfort, Fruitmarket Gallery.**

Two heads are better than none. Art as a partisan of agrarian reform, a bear-leader friskily celebrating the appellation of the bird of paradise.

#### **Nicotine Patch, Inverleith House.**

The table in the middle of the floor was as big as a house and the chairs around it were as high as trees.

#### **Archibald Campbell and Harley WS Photography Prize, Stills.**

There's nothing quite so horrific as man's inhumanity to man, and whenever an unusual historical tale comes to light, Archibald Campbell and his intrepid assistant Harley WS will be there to investigate.

#### **Difficile est saturam non scribere, Sleeper Gallery.**

It's difficult not to write satire.

### REGIONAL

#### **Maybe it was me, Limosine Bull, Aberdeen.**

'Crazy' artist Toni Davies has researched the history of the gallery building, finding out that his own father used to torture dwarves and freaks on site with croquet mallet interventions. These works shamefully pander to the society of the spectacle,

but never-the-less we loved looking at his sordid documentation.

#### **Live and Let Die, Cornerhouse, Manchester.**

A farcical stinking mass of stones and lime and dung scab and hunger.

#### **Ethnic Rug Thug, Terrance Donovan Gallery, Jersey.**

Tayto never seen scene like this. Terrance illustrates the sixth zeal of Koresh. Koresh for all his bad press/faith is actually correct. Terrance made Tayto smile with what he did, excluding his own vanity and tendency to make love sex gestures at Tayto wife.

#### **Masters of the Universe, Delfina Project Space, Croydon.**

What is it with you about rock music, every time a 'pun' concerning Iron Maiden, MOR and what-have-you crops up, you seem to slag them off. An example here is the Satan project. We don't know what makes you think that rock bands write about the Devil all the time, 'cos none of the records we listen to do anything of the sort. And if you think Iron Maiden are a 'crappy heavy metal' group, then perhaps you'd like to explain why No Prayer For The Dying has gone straight in at Number Two?

#### **Best Before, Matthew Higgs' Fridge, London.**

As Hollywood gave us stability, Jeremy Deller and Jim Carey got busy in the icebox.

#### **Bring back Working Practice, The Annual Programme, Manchester.**

Bring back working practice is an exhibition held at Clive Sinclair's first studio in sixteen years, based in a schemie (non-context specific) metal grill fronted 7Up outlet just east of brick Lane (pool table and soft drinks with posters on ceiling only) and the (Pheonix Specific) Pheonix pub in Broughton St, Edinburgh. The work seems to benefit from a hands-on application which derives from being tried out in the studio first. Conceptually it seems to deal with issues such as Hitchcock, and modern urban life, including sport (which takes place inside the touch lines only).

#### **One Liner Designer, institute of myopic research, Dundee.**

Lucas van Valkenborch provides interest but fucks up by concentrating largely on the glamour of institutionalised peripheral activity through a critique of the suggested relationship between science and washing powder (Radion).

#### **White Van Man, Ormeau Baths, Belfast.**

Virgins under hedges and scarlet whores confront the multinational networked economy with a tower of traumatic mince (and pies).

#### **Mongrel Tate Website, Tate Modern, London.**

Morning boys! Once-in-a-lifetime chance to invite dissent. Capitalism will be over soon, unfortunately.

#### **Steamy Windows, Anthony Wilkinson, London.**

If Madonna has the time, she really must pick up a few sartorial tips on cowboy gear from future Turner Prize nominee Nicky Hirst.

#### **Common Culture, Gaswerk, London.**

Nothing was at stake except perhaps the truth. In private, we had contended that we didn't like Common Culture but that they were the real thing, which was the view pretty generally held at the time. I remember that Mr Tayto about '90, '91 asked me, "You don't really think about common culture do you?" He was for Common Culture, but for him and others Common Culture did something else, it wasn't good. You could see it, those beautiful hands, all that stuff. By the time Common Culture were discovered though, he had lost their stuff. They went over well though. I thought when I wrote that, they had lost it, that I was asserting the truth, protecting the truth, establishing the truth, re-establishing it, I thought that's what I had to do. Mr Tayto himself knew it was bullshit, but he was ready to accept any explanation for what they did, because they were hard up for words.

#### **In for a penny, in for a pound, Dundee Contemporary Arts, London.**

By transforming the 'white triangle' into a Cockney bookmakers, Carey Young makes her name appear in front of our eyes as we enter a coma.

#### **WAR-U-LIKE, Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis.**

Being fond of the ladies tends to obstruct and neutralise critique of the less significant cultural realignments at stake, excluding copious lyrical passages that have narrower parallels in culture, weaving tangled webs of mostly doomed but interesting insects.

Mr Tayto and Mr Tayto are associated convenience snack manufacturers, based in Eire and Northern Ireland respectively.



# Mistaken Identities

Manuel Rafael Mancillas

*"The land belongs to those who toil it."*

— Zapata

Maclovio Rojas was a very special young man of strong convictions and faith. He died as he walked in the corridor of power. I had a photograph of him, well, I thought it was, and I wanted to "rescue his image." I had never heard of an Indian from Oaxaca, other than two of our presidents, Juárez and Díaz, to have a community named after him/her. I spoke to the other members of the Border Arts Workshop (BAW) and we decided to visit the community and talk to the residents about painting a mural of Maclovio's image in their community center.

Jaime Cota is a labor right's organizer in Tijuana and member of the Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (FZLN) the civilian support group of the EZLN. Members and sympathizers of the FZLN were the people who had built the original structure of the Aguascalientes in the Poblado Maclovio Rojas. The small structure and makeshift stage built out of garage doors and recycled wood, stood in the middle of the community. We approached Jaime Cota about doing the mural of Maclovio and he then took us to the Poblado and introduced us to Hortensia Hernández and Artemio Osuna.

The relationship began as Hortensia Hernández, leader and president of the base committee, was looking at the tiny 35 mm slide trying to figure out the person in the image. She liked the image and agreed with me that it looked like Maclovio Rojas. She was not sure, but she was sure that the person standing next to him was his brother. We had a long conversation about Maclovio Rojas and about the legal problems they were facing in the community. As she spoke, she pointed behind her at row upon row of stacked cargo containers, built by Hyundai Precision Co. and explained that the Korean maquiladora was encroaching on them and threatening to take the rest of their land. Three years before, Hyundai had relocated one of their manufacturing plants to Tijuana, as part of a Korean-México negotiation agreement, that ex-President Salinas de Gortari had signed to attract Asian investment into the border areas.

In 1993, Hyundai appropriated for free 100 hectares for storage and parking of their cargo containers establishing the second largest cargo container manufacturing plant in the world. The real estate surrounding this industrial park, once located on the outskirts and marginal areas of Tijuana was transformed through a Baja California State-sponsored development of the industrial-commercial infrastructure of the adjacent area to the Poblado Maclovio Rojas, and became highly coveted by land speculators.

An officially stamped invoice dated in 1991, issued by the federal Agrarian Reform Department is pasted on the wall of the Poblado's assembly hall. The document is proof that the Unión de Posesionarios del Poblado Maclovio Rojas Márquez, A.C., paid the government for the disputed 197 hectares. The Poblado has been steadily growing as additional families move in to the community and parcels are sub-divided into

single-family 336 sq. ft. lots. The majority of the houses are built with discarded garage doors and wood pallets, many houses, however, are now being built out of cinder block and mortar. The development of the commercial area next to the Hyundai storage area and the main highway now includes 2 PEMEX gas stations, mini-market and truck stop, a new furniture assembly maquiladora plant, and the former municipal slaughterhouse has now been turned into the Tijuana Police Academy. No joke.

The receipt shows that on 8/3/95 the Pobladores of Maclovio Rojas paid \$1,892.78 dollars, the value the federal agency had appraised at the time. Currently, the state officials have appraised the real estate at \$10.00 a square meter, making the 197 hectares polygon, currently occupied by the Maclovianos, worth 197 million dollars.

The image on the slide, although great in composition, had a dark shadow around the eyes caused by the rim of the hat. Unable to clear it electronically, we needed another photograph to get a better definition of his eyes. We came across Maclovio's brother, Lucio Rojas, during presidential candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas presentation at Cal State University at San Marcos. The organizers of the event presented Lucio as one of the main catalysts of the organization of Mixteco-Zapoteca migrant farmworkers in San Diego's North County. When we approached him, he told us that his family was still living in San Quintín, and that he was going to travel there during the following Fourth of July holiday. We decided to visit and interview the Rojas family members to get an insight on Maclovio life and to secure a better photograph.

Travelling on the transpeninsular highway the 200 miles from the border south to San Quintín valley along the scenic Baja California coast, is both beautiful and treacherous. The valley began developing high yielding agro-industrial farming for export in 1980. As the Southern California suburban land rush was displacing farmland to the south, the fertile San Quintín valley became the yearlong supplier of vegetables to the north. This agricultural expansion required cheap farm labor. Mixteca Indians being expelled by poverty from their homelands in the state of Oaxaca, quickly met this demand. In 1985 almost 80,000 farmworkers were working in these tomato maquiladoras, while living in labor camps inside the grower's property. Maclovio's family had immigrated here in 1980, he joined them in 1984. By 1986, he had become a leader and president of the CIOAC, a national organization that was organizing a campaign to unionize the farmworkers. As many leaders before him, he was faced with an enormous task, there has never been an independent union of farmworkers in México, Maclovio gave his life for this cause. He was ran over by a truck as he crossed the highway, the murder was ordered by a grower, a rival Mixteca leader carried out the killing. He was killed on the 4th of July 1987.

We arrived two days after the 9th anniversary of his death and interviewed the family. They invited us to the unveiling of the community's museum and celebration. As I was presenting the enlarged and framed photograph to his older brother Jose, he paused for what seemed an hour. Trying to find words, he politely thanked me for my good intentions and said that, unfortunately, it was not a picture of his brother Maclovio, but it was instead his uncle Fausto. And indeed, the other person in the photograph was his brother Lucio. The embarrassment was eased when they kindly provided us with the only photograph they had of Maclovio, a photo taken on the day of his marriage.

## Hyundai and the struggle for independent unions

We decided to extend our original idea of painting the mural of Maclovio's image, that we needed to explore the idea of a long-term project with both the San Quintín communities as well as in Tijuana.

We travelled to the Hyundai plant near the Poblado Maclovio Rojas to witness the initiation ceremony of an independent union of the workers. Months before, there had been a workers' initiative to organize in plants that were subcontracting to Hyundai. The movement had been squashed and the leaders fired. The meeting was held in a half-built structure adjacent to the main Hyundai plant, about 20 workers pledged and signed the union cards. Unbeknown to all of us present at this meeting, Hortensia, Artemio and Juan Regalado were arrested by Baja California State Judicial police on their way to the meeting. The police laid-in-wait, and were actually waiting for Hortensia to leave the community to apprehend her on trumped up charges of illegal possession of property and damages to private property. The next day the radio newscasts were reporting their arrest as we began another chapter in our collaborative process.

We immediately travelled to Tijuana's state government offices to document the protest by the residents of Maclovio and supporters from other communities, and several of Tijuana's labor and human rights activists. The protesters were hoping that the issue of the arrests of the community's leaders would be resolved in Tijuana, thus avoiding the need to travel to the State's capital in Mexicali 120 miles away to deal with their freedom. The local representatives of the governor of Baja California failed to resolve the issue, the leadership then resolved to march to Mexicali on September 4, 1996 to demand the freedom of the three compañeros.

## La Marcha por la Libertad

Wednesday morning, September 4, 1996. The main plaza of the Poblado Maclovio Rojas was full of people. Women and children milling around, painting banners and signs, preparing their bodies and souls for the road ahead, packing food, water, and hydrolyzed serum donated by supporters. Their resolve was strong: they would march to meet face to face with the governor of Baja California. Highway 2 will take the marchers through the 5,500 feet Sierra Juárez pass, down the Rumorosa grade to the Laguna Salada 110 feet below sea level, where temperatures can climb to 115 degrees at midday.

Over 300 people began the march, the corridor of power waited for no one, not even freedom marchers. The madness grew intense, impatient horns blasted through the morning sun; a massive traffic jam backed up for miles. Dirt and smoke filtered the colors flying in the sky.

One marcher, Rubén Hernández died while crossing the desert. The Maclovianos pledged to return a year later to the place where he died, and erected a monument in his honor and for Freedom.

These events—the arrests of the leadership and the protest march, transformed the collaborative process from the networking phase of exchanging information, to a coordinating phase in which our inter-activities were considerably altered. BAW participated in the march, providing direct support to the marchers and by video documenting the event. BAW contacted support groups and several NGOs in San Diego, primarily the American



Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and their local US-México Border Program, who then contacted others in the network of transborder social justice and solidarity groups in the region.

A marcher died of dehydration in the sweltering heat of the Mexicali desert; Hortensia Hernández spent 3 months in the infamous La Mesa State Penitentiary as a political prisoner; these events transformed the new symbols for BAW's aesthetic quest.

## Out of Line and Beyond Borders

The Support Committee of Maquiladora Workers (SCMW) a non-profit NGO based in San Diego began seeking support from the national network via alerts and developed a letter writing campaign to demand from the Baja California and México City governments the freedom of the compañeros.

The SCMW has, for many years solicited resources to maintain full time organizers in Tijuana, financial resources were provided to the compañeros in Maclovio Rojas to support their legal defense fund. The SCMW kept providing direct support by organizing fundraising NAFTA tours in the Poblado. Busloads of activists from the Southern California region visited Maclovio for lunch and fact finding activities to discover the effects of NAFTA in the border region. Currently, the SCMW continues to have close ties with the AFL-CIO and other US labor organizations that have opposed NAFTA.

An article by Julio Laboy published in the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* (California section) in 2/2/97, detailed the "friends within the belly of the monster," that have supported the struggle in Maclovio Rojas. The image of Hortensia Hernández also appeared on the front page, with a caption referring to her as Sub-Comandante Hortensia. The reference to the EZLN made Hyundai corporate officers and Susan Golding San Diego's Republican mayor quite nervous. The local representative of Hyundai expressed concern about doing business in a hostile environment and the possibility of relocating the plant that produces \$50 million dollars a year. The article, although important for getting the attention of the corporate investors by pointing out the strong support from within the US, misleads the reader by making a reference to Hernández as being part of the political arm of the EZLN. The week after the article was published both Hortensia Hernández, the Poblado's committee and Hyundai's officers corrected the article in the local newspapers. In a press conference conducted in the Poblado, Hernández made it clear—the residents of Maclovio Rojas support and identify with the struggle being waged by the EZLN and the indigenous communities in Chiapas. The Poblado's organization, however, does not represent the political arm of the Zapatistas, in fact there is no official "political arm" of the EZLN.

Hyundai also conducted a press conference to deny any attempts by the corporation to take over any of the land belonging to Maclovio. After the *Wall Street Journal* article, the cargo containers that were stored, stacked three-high next to the Poblado, were removed and only a couple of hundred of them still remain in the lot.

The SCMW turned its attention to supporting the efforts of the Han Young (a subsidiary of Hyundai) workers working to organize an independent union. Several of the original leaders of the Han Young workers who began the organizing effort were residents of the Poblado Maclovio Rojas. There is ample documentation of the Han Young worker's struggle, it has reached worldwide renown through many publications, specifically *Z Magazine* and articles by free-lance writer David Bacon.

## Engagement and Cooperation

During this time, BAW was constructing its annual "Border Realities XI" installation at the Centro Cultural de la Raza, in San Diego. This depicted

the resistance and struggle of Maclovio Rojas. Members of the base committee of the Poblado were invited to the opening and spoke at the event, the following week we were invited by Artemio Osuna to meet and begin discussions concerning our community engagement project in Maclovio.

BAW was invited to participate in *inSite* '97 a triennial transborder public art festival. By securing funding, first from a grant from Installation Gallery, we were able to transform the collaborative relationship into a cooperation phase and commit to a long-term project. The *inSite* triennial festivals are funded by several institutional governmental sources that are funnelled through Installation Gallery. The festivals are organized with the participation of many of the regional IGOs and NGOs including corporate, social and political, also the regional galleries and museums. BAW then obtained a grant from the US/México Fund for Culture that enabled us to extend the terms of our project and to move beyond the initial phase that was funded for the *inSite* '97 Festival.

BAW began negotiations with the community's leadership as to the nature and context of our participation in the community, which asked for more frequent visits. We requested an area in the community to build a storage space in order to keep materials and equipment. A decision was made to provide a space in the area of the Aguascalientes. Artemio Osuna explained that the Aguascalientes' area of the community was intended to house regional organizations so they could establish their outreach offices. BAW presented a design of a two-story building made out of discarded wooden garage doors. The base committee decided to build with cinder block, to insure longevity and security. The wooden garage doors originally acquired to build the center were used to line the perimeter of the area and were painted with murals depicting the community's struggle and history. Included in the murals was our original intent to paint the image of Maclovio Rojas at the top of the stage area. It took the Workshop exactly one year from the time of the initial negotiations with the base committee to finish the construction of the center. The Aguascalientes was inaugurated on July 4, 1998, to commemorate the 11th anniversary of Maclovio Rojas' death.

## The Artist as a Vehicle for Community Action

The Aguascalientes in the Poblado Maclovio Rojas was built in the spirit of the EZLN's Aguascalientes. Currently, there are five Aguascalientes in Chiapas. The insurgent army built the Aguascalientes with the mission to serve as a place to develop a culture of resistance, and to serve as the actual links to the outside civil society. La sociedad civil: Indigenous peoples, students, workers, community associations, gays and lesbians, barzonistas (bankrupt native mid-range commerce and industrial entrepreneurs that got hit by the Peso financial crisis), old school leftists and new age rock stars, housewives, scholars, linking a global consciousness to a local and national democratic movement. The Aguascalientes in Oventic, one of the Zapatista's autonomous municipalities in Chiapas, is being built through a collaborative project between the Oventic community and San Diegans for Peace with Dignity in México. Peter Brown, one of the organizers of this group, a

long time border activist and school teacher was deported last year by Mexican immigration officials for violating sovereignty laws. He continues to organize caravans of delegations from San Diego to Chiapas.

The EZLN conducted a National Consultation campaign during March 1999, 5000 indigenous militants mobilized and travelled from their Chiapas communities throughout the entire scope of the Mexican country seeking feedback from the civil society. The EZLN militants surveyed the population on questions of indigenous rights and

their opinion concerning the implementation of the San Andrés Larrainzar Accords. The militants also asked for support to end the war of extermination being waged by the government against their people. The government has refused to comply to their agreement with the EZLN. Such Accords called for the Regional Autonomy and the Self-Governance of the Indigenous peoples throughout México. During the campaign a delegation of EZLN militants met with the Maclovio Rojas community in the Aguascalientes and established mutual concerns in their particular struggles.

A delegation of 19 members visited the Tijuana-Tecate Border region and a highly significant event and piece of border art happened during the visit to the region. The EZLN organized the campaign by sending an equal number of women and men, in Tijuana 9 couples and one child, visited and met with a wide array of groups. Events were organized by a transborder coordinating committee that brought together organizations and constituencies that usually don't work together. The delegation listened to speakers dealing with regional issues and received solidarity declarations from organizations throughout Southern California.

For obvious security reasons, the delegation could not obtain visas or otherwise to cross the border, so a demonstration event was organized along the 12 foot fence, in an area where the transborder NAFTA train has a crossing gate. Scaffolding was set up to install a platform high enough so that supporters on the other side of the fence could see and hear the EZLN speakers.

## The role of the artist

BAWs role in this community, as artists and cultural workers, is continuously redefined. The initial role was to link the community's struggle to the outside by documenting and producing work to create a public consciousness and to prevent a violent removal of the pobladores by government forces. The last government attempt to forcefully evict them happened on February 28, 1998.

Through BAW's network in Southern California we are able to create alerts and mobilize support. The leadership of the Poblado wants to develop formal transborder alliances, that would include community activists from the Orange County Friends of Maclovio Rojas, the Green Party, CIS-PES in Los Angeles, and other activists and grassroots organizations, and BAW acting in the role of transborder inside/outside facilitators.

BAW facilitates solidarity and working delegations to the Poblado. The Orange County Friends of Maclovio Rojas through fundraising purchased a towing trailer to transport garage doors and building materials. The American Friends Service Committee sends annual delegations from their youth program for a week-long stay for community work projects. Global Exchange also brings a youth program. Recently, two French scholars spent a 6 week long residency in the center producing a documentary for French TV. An Australian graduate student is working on a performance-based research project; and a Brazilian artist is developing a summer-long residency and community event planned for this year, for the *inSite* 2000 Festival.

## Long Term Commitment

Through the 12 years the Maclovio Rojas have kept alive their movement and struggle for the land and the development of their community, they have increased their potential and capacity for self-governing having taken up their own plans for their families and neighbors.

In spite of it all—jails, attacks, threats and divisive actions taken by the government against their organization—the Maclovianos realize that it's up to them to develop the infrastructure of the Poblado.

*A longer version of this article together with a web project documenting the BAW project can be found at:* <http://www.geocities.com/zopilotl.geo/img001.html>

